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AUGUST 2016

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The Old Whim Horse

He's an old grey horse, with his head bowed sadly,
And with dim old eyes and a queer roll aft,
With the off-fore sprung and the hind screwed badly,
And he bears all over the brands of graft;
And he lifts his head from the grass to wonder
Why by night and day the whim is still,
Why the silence is, and the stampers' thunder
Sounds forth no more from the shattered mill.

In that whim he worked when the night winds bellowed
On the riven summit of Giant's Hand,
And by day when prodigal Spring had yellowed
All the wide, long sweep of enchanted land;
And he knew his shift, and the whistle's warning,
And he knew the calls of the boys below;
Through the years, unbidden, at night or morning,
He had taken his stand by the old whim bow.

But the whim stands still, and the wheeling swallow
In the silent shaft hangs her home of clay,
And the lizards flirt and the swift snakes follow
O'er the grass-grown brace in the summer day;
And the corn springs high in the cracks and corners
Of the forge, and down where the timber lies;
And the crows are perched like a band of mourners
On the broken hut on the Hermit's Rise.

All the hands have gone, for the rich reef paid out,
And the company waits till the calls come in;
But the old grey horse, like the claim, is played out,
And no market's near for his bones and skin.
So they let him live, and they left him grazing
By the creek, and oft in the evening dim
I have seen him stand on the rises, gazing
At the ruined brace and the rotting whim.

The floods rush high in the gully under,
And the lightnings lash at the shrinking trees,
Or the cattle down from the ranges blunder
As the fires drive by on the summer breeze.
Still the feeble horse at the right hour wanders
To the lonely ring, though the whistle's dumb,
And with hanging head by the bow he ponders
Where the whim boy's gone -- why the shifts don't come.

But there comes a night when he sees lights glowing
In the roofless huts and the ravaged mill,
When he hears again all the stampers going --
Though the huts are dark and the stampers still:
When he sees the steam to the black roof clinging
As its shadows roll on the silver sands,
And he knows the voice of his driver singing,
And the knocker's clang where the braceman stands.

See the old horse take, like a creature dreaming,
On the ring once more his accustomed place;
But the moonbeams full on the ruins streaming
Show the scattered timbers and grass-grown brace.
Yet HE hears the sled in the smithy falling,
And the empty truck as it rattles back,
And the boy who stands by the anvil, calling;
And he turns and backs, and he "takes up slack".

While the old drum creaks, and the shadows shiver
As the wind sweeps by, and the hut doors close,
And the bats dip down in the shaft or quiver
In the ghostly light, round the grey horse goes;
And he feels the strain on his untouched shoulder,
Hears again the voice that was dear to him,
Sees the form he knew -- and his heart grows bolder
As he works his shift by the broken whim.

He hears in the sluices the water rushing
As the buckets drain and the doors fall back;
When the early dawn in the east is blushing,
He is limping still round the old, old track.
Now he pricks his ears, with a neigh replying
To a call unspoken, with eyes aglow,
And he sways and sinks in the circle, dying;
From the ring no more will the grey horse go.

In a gully green, where a dam lies gleaming,
And the bush creeps back on a worked-out claim,
And the sleepy crows in the sun sit dreaming
On the timbers grey and a charred hut frame,
Where the legs slant down, and the hare is squatting
In the high rank grass by the dried-up course,
Nigh a shattered drum and a king-post rotting
Are the bleaching bones of the old grey horse.

Dowell O'Reilly.

The Project Gutenberg Etext of An Anthology of Australian Verse

EAGLE LORE.

CURIOUS STORIES OF THE OLD-TIME FAITH IN THE "KING OF THE FEATHERED TRIBES."

Birds were trusted, honored and made the symbols of wisdom and power in the old time, and they have not, at least in their emblematical signification, been neglected in modern times. The eagle, in particular, is exalted to a high and potential distinction. On the banner of a hundred States he is displayed as a conquering symbol and floats to-day over many a fair realm where Rome's imperial standard never penetrated.

The eagle has always been considered a royal bird, and was a favorite with the poets. They called him king of the air and made him bear the thunderbolts of Jove. Euripides tells us that "the birds in general are the messengers of the gods, but the eagle is king, and interpreter of the great deity Jupiter."

The eagle figures in the early legends of all people. When the ancient Aztecs, the mound-builders of the Mississippi Valley, were moving southward under Mexi, their king, their god, Vitziputzli, whose image was borne in a tabernacle made of reeds and placed in the center of the encampment whenever they halted, directed them to settle where they should find an eagle sitting on a fig-tree growing out of a rock in a lake. After a series of wanderings and adventures that do not shrink from comparison with the most extravagant legends of the heroic ages of antiquity, they at last beheld perched on a shrub in the midst of the lake of Tenochtitlan a royal eagle with a serpent in his talons and his broad wings opened to the rising sun. They hailed the auspicious omen and laid the foundation of their capital by sinking piles into the shallows. This legend is commemorated by the device of the eagle and the cactus, which forms the arms of the modern Mexican Republic.

A goose, it is said, saved Rome once upon a time, but it was an eagle that directed the selection of the ancient Byzantium--now Constantinople--as the capital of the Eastern Empire. The site of ancient Troy had been settled upon by Constantine, and the engineers were engaged in surveying the plan of the city, when an eagle swooped down, seized the measuring line, flew away with it and dropped it at Byzantium. At any rate, this was the story told to the soldiers and marines, in order to reconcile them to the change of plan, which they might otherwise have deemed an unfavorable omen, though the splendid situation of the new capital and its long prosperity, prove how admirably sagacious was the choice of its founder.

In the reign of Ancus Martius, King of Rome, a wealthy man, whose name was Tarquin, came to that city from one of the Etruscan States. Sitting beside his wife in his chariot, as he approached the gates of Rome, an eagle, it is said, plucked his cap from his head, flew up in the air, and then, returning, placed it on his head again. Not a few suspect that the eagle was a tame one and had been taught to perform this trick. If so, however, the apparent prodigy lost none of its effect in the popular belief, and Tarquin succeeded Ancus as King of Rome. The eagle's head on the Roman sceptre, and later on its standard, took its origin from this occurrence.

Plutarch, in his life of Theseus, relates that when Cymon was sent by the Athenians to procure the bones of that hero, who had long before been buried in Scyros, to reinter them in his former capital, he found great difficulty in ascertaining the burial place of the ancient monarch. While prosecuting his search, however, he chanced to observe an eagle that had alighted on a small elevation and was trying with his beak and claws to break the sod. Considering this a fortunate omen, they explored the place and discovered the coffin of a man of extraordinary size, with a lance of brass and a sword lying by it. These relics were conveyed to Athens amid great rejoicing, where they found a resting place in the famous temple of Theseus, whose ruins are still in existence.

The old historians state that the Greek poet Aeschylus lost his life through an eagle's mistaking his bald head for a rock and dropping a tortoise upon it in order to break the shell of his amphibious prey, but which broke, instead, the poet's skull. That an eagle, proverbially the keenest-sighted of created things, should mistake a man's head for a stone is absurd beyond the necessity of comment. The story is probably intended for an allegory, showing how stupidity can overwhelm genius, or a dull criticism smash a lively poet.

In A. D. 431 there was war between the Emperor Theodosius II. and Genseric the Vandal, and Marcian, the general of the former, was taken prisoner. The unfortunate captive was doomed to death. At the place of execution an eagle alighted on his head and sat there some time undismayed by the tumult around it. Upon seeing this, and believing that the captive was destined for some exalted fortune, Genseric pardoned him and sent him home. About eighteen years afterwards Theodosius died, and, as his sister had married Marcian, the latter became Emperor of Constantinople.

During the wars between the Christians and the Moors, of Spain, a Spanish knight engaged in combat with a gigantic Moslem. The conflict remained undecided for a long time, but at last the Spaniard began to lose ground. At this juncture an eagle, swooping from above, flew into the face of the Moorish giant, and, taking advantage of this sudden and miraculous intervention, the Spanish champion plunged his sword into

the heart of his antagonist, thus winning the battle.

Rudolph, count of Hapsburg, one morning was looking out of his castle window upon the surrounding country, and while thus engaged noticed an eagle circling strangely above a certain place in the forest. Taking some men at arms he proceeded to the spot, where he found a beautiful and high-born lady held captive by a band of robbers. He rescued her and afterwards married her. When a new emperor was wanted in Germany he obtained the election through the influence of his wife's relatives. In this romantic fashion began the glory of the present reigning house of Austria.

I have alluded to the prominence of eagles in the arms of nations and individuals. The famous ensign of the Roman legions verified the text of Scripture when, in referring to the eagle, Job says: "Where the slain are there is she," for the Roman bird flew over nearly the whole known world and delighted in destruction and in threatening it. The Byzantine Caesars sported a double-headed eagle to indicate that they were lords of both the Eastern and the Western world. The Russians adopted the symbol from those princes. About four hundred years ago a lady, who claimed to be the heir of the Byzantine Emperor, married Ivan III., Czar of Russia, who, therefore, assumed the Greek arms, which may possibly be restored again to Constantinople by Russian arms.

The United States chose for her emblem the same imperial and triumphant bird. Some have considered it as not altogether an appropriate device for our republican government. Students of natural history have observed that the eagle is mean and cowardly. He lives, moreover, a life of rapine, plundering birds that are bolder and more industrious than himself. This is rather a bad character for our national bird.

The ancients would probably be horrified at such a criticism of their royal bird, and, after all, it is not surprising that they held him in such reverence. These people of the long ago had no books nor newspapers, but they were proficient students in the book of nature. By them the birds were accounted prophets, and by their varied flights they foretold future events and regulated the movements and enterprises of nations.

We call the wisdom of birds instinct, but they considered it divine intelligence. Nor was it strange that they should take them for the interpreters of fate, seeing that in many things the birds were wiser than themselves, for they seemed to have a knowledge of the future that was denied to man.

We have some idea of how these people regarded the movements of the birds from one of the ancient Greek writers, who, in a play entitled "The Birds," makes them give the following account of themselves: "We point out to man the work of each season. When the crow takes his

flight across the Mediterranean it is seed-time--time for the pilot to season his timber. The kite tells you when you ought to shear your sheep; the swallow shows you when you ought to sell your watch-coats, and buy light dresses for the summer. We birds are the hinge of everything you do. We regulate your merchandise, your eating and drinking, and your marriages."

This Greek play-writer probably voiced the sentiments of the majority of the people, who had implicit faith in what they called "the prophecies of the birds;" and it is not surprising that they endowed the eagle--the king of the feathered tribes--with almost supernatural wisdom.

Phebe Westcott Humphrey.

SEPTEMBER.

The golden-rod is yellow;
The corn is turning brown;
The trees in apple orchards
With fruit are bending down.

The gentian's bluest fringes
Are curling in the sun;
In dusty pods the milkweed
Its hidden silk has spun.

The sedges flaunt their harvest,
In every meadow nook;
And asters by the brook-side
Make asters in the brook.

From dewy lanes at morning
The grapes' sweet odors rise;
At noon the roads all flutter
With yellow butterflies.

By all these lovely tokens
September days are here,
With summer's best of weather,
And autumn's best of cheer.

Helen Hunt Jackson.

Both from: The Project Gutenberg EBook of Birds and Nature, Vol. VIII, No. 2, September 1900, by Various

THE NUN OF THE TEMPLE OF AMIDA

When O-Toyo's husband--a distant cousin, adopted into her family for love's sake--had been summoned by his lord to the capital, she did not feel anxious about the future. She felt sad only. It was the first time since their bridal that they had ever been separated. But she had her father and mother to keep her company, and, dearer than either,--though she would never have confessed it even to herself,--her little son. Besides, she always had plenty to do. There were many household duties to perform, and there was much clothing to be woven--both silk and cotton.

Once daily at a fixed hour, she would set for the absent husband, in his favorite room, little repasts faultlessly served on dainty lacquered trays,--miniature meals such as are offered to the ghosts of the ancestors, and to the gods(1). These repasts were served at the east side of the room, and his kneeling-cushion placed before them. The reason they were served at the east side, was because he had gone east. Before removing the food, she always lifted the cover of the little soup-bowl to see if there was vapor upon its lacquered inside surface. For it is said that if there be vapor on the inside of the lid covering food so offered, the absent beloved is well. But if there be none, he is dead,--because that is a sign that his soul has returned by itself to seek nourishment. O-Toyo found the lacquer thickly beaded with vapor day by day.

The child was her constant delight. He was three years old, and fond of asking questions to which none but the gods know the real answers. When he wanted to play, she laid aside her work to play with him. When he wanted to rest, she told him wonderful stories, or gave pretty pious answers to his questions about those things which no man can ever understand. At evening, when the little lamps had been lighted before the holy tablets and the images, she taught his lips to shape the words of filial prayer. When he had been laid to sleep, she brought her work near him, and watched the still sweetness of his face. Sometimes he would smile in his dreams; and she knew that Kwannon the divine was playing shadowy play with him, and she would murmur the Buddhist invocation to that Maid "who looketh forever down above the sound of prayer."

Sometimes, in the season of very clear days, she would climb the mountain of Dakeyama, carrying her little boy on her back. Such a trip delighted him much, not only because of what his mother

taught him to see, but also of what she taught him to hear. The sloping way was through groves and woods, and over grassed slopes, and around queer rocks; and there were flowers with stories in their hearts, and trees holding tree-spirits. Pigeons cried korup-korup; and doves sobbed owao, owao and cicada wheezed and fluted and tinkled.

All those who wait for absent dear ones make, if they can, a pilgrimage to the peak called Dakeyama. It is visible from any part of the city; and from its summit several provinces can be seen. At the very top is a stone of almost human height and shape, perpendicularly set up; and little pebbles are heaped before it and upon it. And near by there is a small Shinto shrine erected to the spirit of a princess of other days. For she mourned the absence of one she loved, and used to watch from this mountain for his coming until she pined away and was changed into a stone. The people therefore built the shrine; and lovers of the absent still pray there for the return of those dear to them; and each, after so praying, takes home one of the little pebbles heaped there. And when the beloved one returns, the pebble must be taken back to the pebble-pile upon the mountain-top, and other pebbles with it, for a thank-offering and commemoration.

Always ere O-Toyo and her son could reach their home after such a day, the dusk would fall softly about them; for the way was long, and they had to both go and return by boat through the wilderness of rice-fields round the town,--which is a slow manner of journeying. Sometimes stars and fireflies lighted them; sometimes also the moon,--and O-Toyo would softly sing to her boy the Izumo child-song to the moon:--

Nono-San,
Little Lady Moon,
How old are you?
"Thirteen days,--
Thirteen and nine."
That is still young,
And the reason must be
For that bright red obi,
So nicely tied(2),
And that nice white girdle
About your hips.
Will you give it to the horse?
"Oh, no, no!"
Will you give it to the cow?
"Oh, no, no!(3)"

And up to the blue night would rise from all those wet leagues of labored field that great soft bubbling chorus which seems the

very voice of the soil itself,--the chant of the frogs. And
O-Toyo would interpret its syllables to the child: Me kayui! me
kayui! "Mine eyes tickle; I want to sleep."

All those were happy hours.

(1) Such a repast, offered to the spirit of the absent one loved,
is called a Kage-zen; lit., "Shadow-tray." The word zen is also
use to signify the meal served on the lacquered tray,--which has
feet, like miniature table. So that time term "Shadow-feast"
would be a better translation of Kage-zen.

(2) Because an obi or girdle of very bright color can be worn
only by children.

(3) Nono-San,
or
O-Tsuki-san
Ikutsu?
"Jiu-san,--
Kokonotsu."

Sore wa mada
Wakai yo,
Wakai ye mo
Dori
Akai iro no
Obi to,
Shire iro no
Obi to
Koshi ni shanto
Musun de.
Uma ni yaru?
"Iyaiya!"
Ushi ni yaru?
"Iyaiya!"

II

Then twice, within the time of three days, those masters of life
and death whose ways belong to the eternal mysteries struck at
her heart. First she was taught that the gentle husband for whom
she had so often prayed never could return to her,--having been
returned unto that dust out of which all forms are borrowed. And
in another little while she knew her boy slept so deep a sleep
that the Chinese physician could not waken him. These things she
learned only as shapes are learned in lightning flashes. Between

and beyond the flashes was that absolute darkness which is the pity of the gods.

It passed; and she rose to meet a foe whose name is Memory. Before all others she could keep her face, as in other days, sweet and smiling. But when alone with this visitant, she found herself less strong. She would arrange little toys and spread out little dresses on the matting, and look at them, and talk to them in whispers, and smile silently. But the smile would ever end in a burst of wild, loud weeping; and she would beat her head upon the floor, and ask foolish questions of the gods.

One day she thought of a weird consolation,--that rite the people name *Toritsu-banashi*,--the evocation of the dead. Could she not call back her boy for one brief minute only? It would trouble the little soul; but would he not gladly bear a moment's pain for her dear sake? Surely!

[To have the dead called back one must go to some priest--Buddhist or Shinto--who knows the rite of incantation. And the mortuary tablet, or *ihai*, of the dead must be brought to that priest.

Then ceremonies of purification are performed; candles are lighted and incense is kindled before the *ihai*; and prayers or parts of sutras are recited; and offerings of flowers and of rice are made. But, in this case, the rice must not be cooked. And when everything has been made ready, the priest, taking in his left hand an instrument shaped like a bow, and striking it rapidly with his right, calls upon the name of the dead, and cries out the words, *Kitazo yo! kitazo yo! kitazo yo!* meaning, "I have come(1)." And, as he cries, the tone of his voice gradually changes until it becomes the very voice of the dead person,--for the ghost enters into him.

Then the dead will answer questions quickly asked, but will cry continually: "Hasten, hasten! for this my coming back is painful, and I have but a little time to stay!" And having answered, the ghost passes; and the priest falls senseless upon his face.

Now to call back the dead is not good. For by calling them back their condition is made worse. Returning to the underworld, they must take a place lower than that which they held before.

To-day these rites are not allowed by law. They once consoled; but the law is a good law, and just,--since there exist men willing to mock the divine which is in human hearts.]

So it came to pass that O-Toyo found herself one night in a lonely little temple at the verge of the city,--kneeling before the ihai of her boy, and hearing the rite of incantation. And presently, out of the lips of the officiant there came a voice she thought she knew,--a voice loved above all others,--but faint and very thin, like a sobbing of wind.

And the thin voice cried to her:--

"Ask quickly, quickly, mother! Dark is the way and long; and I may not linger."

Then tremblingly she questioned:--

"Why must I sorrow for my child? What is the justice of the gods?"

And there was answer given:--

"O mother, do not mourn me thus! That I died was only that you might not die. For the year was a year of sickness and of sorrow,--and it was given me to know that you were to die; and I obtained by prayer that I should take your place(2).

"O mother, never weep for me! it is not kindness to mourn for the dead. Over the River of Tears(3) their silent road is; and when mothers weep, the flood of that river rises, and the soul cannot pass, but must wander to and fro.

"Therefore, I pray you, do not grieve, O mother mine! Only give me a little water sometimes."

(1) Whence the Izumo saying about one who too often announces his coming: "Thy talk is like the talk of necromancy!"--Toritsubanashi no yona.

(2) Migawari, "substitute," is the religious term.

(3) "Namida-no-Kawa."

III

From that hour she was not seen to weep. She performed, lightly and silently, as in former days, the gentle duties of a daughter.

Seasons passed; and her father thought to find another husband for her. To the mother, he said:--

"If our daughter again have a son, it will be great joy for her, and for all of us."

But the wiser mother made answer:--

"Unhappy she is not. It is impossible that she marry again. She has become as a little child, knowing nothing of trouble or sin."

It was true that she had ceased to know real pain. She had begun to show a strange fondness for very small things. At first she had found her bed too large--perhaps through the sense of emptiness left by the loss of her child; then, day by day, other things seemed to grow too large,--the dwelling itself, the familiar rooms, the alcove and its great flower-vases,--even the household utensils. She wished to eat her rice with miniature chop-sticks out of a very small bowl such as children use.

In these things she was lovingly humored; and in other matters she was not fantastic. The old people consulted together about her constantly. At last the father said:--

"For our daughter to live with strangers might be painful. But as we are aged, we may soon have to leave her. Perhaps we could provide for her by making her a nun. We might build a little temple for her."

Next day the mother asked O-Toyo:--

"Would you not like to become a holy nun, and to live in a very, very small temple, with a very small altar, and little images of the Buddhas? We should be always near you. If you wish this, we shall get a priest to teach you the sutras."

O-Toyo wished it, and asked that an extremely small nun's dress be got for her. But the mother said:--

"Everything except the dress a good nun may have made small. But she must wear a large dress--that is the law of Buddha."

So she was persuaded to wear the same dress as other nuns.

IV

They built for her a small An-dera, or Nun's-Temple, in an empty court where another and larger temple, called Amida-ji, had once

stood. The An-dera was also called Amida-ji, and was dedicated to Amida-Nyorai and to other Buddhas. It was fitted up with a very small altar and with miniature altar furniture. There was a tiny copy of the sutras on a tiny reading-desk, and tiny screens and bells and kakemono. And she dwelt there long after her parents had passed away. People called her the Amida-ji no Bikuni,--which means The Nun of the Temple of Amida.

A little outside the gate there was a statue of Jizo. This Jizo was a special Jizo--the friend of sick children. There were nearly always offerings of small rice-cakes to be seen before him. These signified that some sick child was being prayed for; and the number of the rice-cakes signified the number of the years of the child. Most often there were but two or three cakes; rarely there were seven or ten. The Amida-ji no Bikuni took care of the statue, and supplied it with incense-offerings, and flowers from the temple garden; for there was a small garden behind the An-dera.

After making her morning round with her alms-bowl, she would usually seat herself before a very small loom, to weave cloth much too narrow for serious use. But her webs were bought always by certain shopkeepers who knew her story; and they made her presents of very small cups, tiny flower-vases, and queer dwarf-trees for her garden.

Her greatest pleasure was the companionship of children; and this she never lacked. Japanese child-life, is mostly passed in temple courts; and many happy childhoods were spent in the court of the Amida-ji. All the mothers in that street liked to have their little ones play there, but cautioned them never to laugh at the Bikuni-San. "Sometimes her ways are strange," they would say; "but that is because she once had a little son, who died, and the pain became too great for her mother's heart. So you must be very good and respectful to her."

Good they were, but not quite respectful in the reverential sense. They knew better than to be that. They called her "Bikuni-San" always, and saluted her nicely; but otherwise they treated her like one of themselves. They played games with her; and she gave them tea in extremely small cups, and made for them heaps of rice-cakes not much bigger than peas, and wove upon her loom cloth of cotton and cloth of silk for the robes of their dolls. So she became to them as a blood-sister.

They played with her daily till they grew too big to play, and left the court of the temple of Amida to begin the bitter work of life, and to become the fathers and mothers of children whom they sent to play in their stead. These learned to love the Bikuni-San

like their parents had done. And the Bikuni-San lived to play with the children of the children of the children of those who remembered when her temple was built.

The people took good heed that she should not know want. There was always given to her more than she needed for herself. So she was able to be nearly as kind to the children as she wished, and to feed extravagantly certain small animals. Birds nested in her temple, and ate from her hand, and learned not to perch upon the heads of the Buddhas.

Some days after her funeral, a crowd of children visited my house. A little girl of nine years spoke for them all:--

"Sir, we are asking for the sake of the Bikuni-San who is dead. A very large haka(1) has been set up for her. It is a nice haka. But we want to give her also a very, very small haka because in the time she was with us she often said that she would like a very little haka. And the stone-cutter has promised to cut it for us, and to make it very pretty, if we can bring the money. Therefore perhaps you will honorably give something."

"Assuredly," I said. "But now you will have nowhere to play."

She answered, smiling:--"We shall still play in the court of the temple of Amida. She is buried there. She will hear our playing, and be glad."

(1) Tombstone.

From: The Project Gutenberg EBook of Kokoro, by Lafcadio Hearn

LOTTKA.

I was not quite seventeen years old, an over-grown pale-faced young fellow, at that awkward and embarrassing age which, conscious, of having out-grown boyish ways, is yet very unsteady and insecure when seeking to tread in the footsteps of men. With an audacious fancy and a timid heart; oscillating between defiant self-confidence and girlish sensitiveness; snatching inquisitively at every veil that hides from mortal eyes the mysteries of human life; to-day knowing the last word of the last question, to-morrow confessing the alphabet has still to be learnt, and getting comfort after so restless and contradictory a fashion that one would have been intolerable to one's very self if not surrounded by fellows in misfortune---that is in years--who were faring no better, and yet continued to endure their personality.

It was at this time that I became intimate with a singular fellow who was some two years older than I, but like myself doomed to spend nearly another year as upper-class student. He did not attend the same gymnasium, nor were his relations, who lived out of Berlin, at all known to mine. I am really puzzled how to explain the fact that in spite of these obstacles we two became so friendly, that scarcely a day passed without his coming up the steep stairs that led to my rooms. Indeed even then a third party seeing us together might have found it hard to say what made us so essential to each other. He was in the habit of entering with a mere nod, walking up and down the room, now and then opening a book, or looking at a picture on the walls, and finally throwing himself into my grandfather's armchair--my substitute for a sofa--where, legs crossed, he would sit for hours, speaking not a word, until I had finished my Latin essay. Often when I looked up from the book before me I met his quiet, dreamy, brown eyes resting on me with a gentle brotherly expression, which made me nod to him in return; and it was a pleasure to me just to feel him there. If he chanced to find me idle, or in a communicative mood, he would let me run on by the hour without interruption, and his silent attention seemed to encourage and comfort me. It was only when we got upon the subject of music that he ever grew excited, and then we both lost ourselves in passionate debate. He had a splendid deep bass voice, that harmonized well with his manly aspect, dark eyes, and brown satin-smooth skin. And as he was also zealously studying the theory of music, it was easy for him to get the better of my superficial lay-talk by weighty arguments; yet whenever he thus drove me into a corner he always seemed pained at my defeat. I remember him, on one occasion, ringing me out of bed, formally to apologise for having, in the ardour of controversy, spoken of Rossini's *Barbiere* which I had been strenuously upholding, as a wretched shaver whose melodies, compared with those of Mozart, were of

little more account than the soap-bubbles in his barber's basin.

In addition too to the extreme placidity that characterized him, he was always ready to do me a number of small services, such as the younger student usually renders to his senior, and there were two other things that helped to rivet our friendship: he had initiated me in the art of smoking, and set my first songs to music. There was one, I remember, which appeared to us at that time peculiarly felicitous both as to words and melody, and we used to sing it as a duet in all our walks together--

"I think in the olden days
That a maiden was loved by me;
But my heart is sick and troubled,
It is all a dream may-be.

"I think in the olden days,
One was basking in sunny bliss;
But whether I or another?
I cannot be sure of this!

"I think in the olden days
That I sang--but know not what;
For I have forgotten all things
Since I've been by her forgot."

Dear and ridiculous season of youth! A poet of sixteen sings of the "old myth" of his lost love-sorrow, and a musician of eighteen with all possible gravity, sets the sobbing strophes to music with a piano-forte accompaniment that seems to foreshadow the outburst of the world's denunciation on the head of the inconstant fair!

We were, however, as I have already said, so especially pleased with this melancholy progeny of our united talents, that we were not long content to keep it to ourselves; we burned with desire to send it forth to the public. At that time the "Dresden Evening Times" under the editorship of, as I believe the late Robert Schneider, admitted poems over which my critical self-esteem could not but shrug its shoulders. To him, therefore, we sent our favourite--anonymously, of course--in the full persuasion that it would appear in the forthcoming number, text and music both, with the request that the unknown contributor would delight the Evening Times with other admirable fruits of genius. Full of a sweet shyness, spite of our incognito, we accordingly took to haunting the eating-houses where that journal was taken in, and blushing looked out for our first-born. But week after week passed by without satisfying our expectations. I myself after twice writing and dignifiedly desiring the manuscript to be returned, gave up all hope, and was so wounded and humiliated by this failure, as first to throw down the gauntlet to an ungrateful contemporaneous world, and

contribute to the pleasure of more enlightened posterity in the form of a longer poem; and then gradually to shun all mention of our unlucky venture, even requesting Bastel (my friend's name being Sebastian) to leave off humming the tune which too vividly recalled to me the mortifying history.

He humoured me on this point, but he could not refrain from privately carrying on his investigations in pastry-cooks' shops, the more that he was devotedly addicted to cakes and sweet things. It was then midsummer, and the small round cherry tarts were wonderfully refreshing to an upper class student's tongue, parched and dry with Latin and Greek. Bastel most seriously asserted that sweets agreed with his voice; he was only able to temper the harshness of his bass notes by plenty of sugar and fruit-juice. I on the contrary, despised such insipid dainties, and preferred to stick to wine, which at that time did very little indeed to clear up any mind I had. But in virtue of my calling I was bound to worship "wine, women, and song," and in the volume of poems at which I was working hard, there was, of course, to be no lack of drinking-songs.

We had now reached July, and the dog-days were beginning, when one afternoon Bastel made his appearance at the usual hour, but in very unusual mood. He lit his cigar indeed, but instead of sitting down to smoke it, he stood motionless at the window for a full quarter of an hour, drumming "Non più andrai" on the panes, and from time to time sighing as though a hundredweight lay on his heart.

"Bastel," said I, "what's wrong?"

No answer.

"Are you ill?" I went on; "or have you had another row with the ordinary? or did the college yesterday give you a bad reception?" (He belonged to a certain secret society much frequented by students, and wore in his waistcoat pocket a tricoloured watch-ribbon which only ventured forth at their solemn meetings.)

Still the same silence on the part of the strange dreamer, and the drumming grew so vehement that the panes began to ring ominously.

It was only when I left off noticing him, that he incoherently began to talk to himself, "There are more things in heaven and earth--" but further he did not carry the quotation.

At last I jumped up, went to him, and caught hold of his hand. "Bastel!" I cried, "what does this fooling mean? Something or other is vexing you. Tell it out, and let us see what can be done, but at least spare my window-panes and behave rationally. Will you light another cigar?"

He shook his head. "If you have time," said he, "let's go out, I may be able to tell you in the open air. This room is so close."

We went down stairs and wandered arm-in-arm through quiet Behren Street, where my parents lived, into Frederick Street. When he got into the full tide of carriages and foot-passengers, he seemed to be in a measure relieved. He pressed my arm, stood still a moment, and broke out: "It is nothing very particular, Paul, but I believe that I am in love, and this time for life."

I was far from laughing at the declaration. At the age of sixteen one believes in the endless duration of every feeling. But I had read my Heine and considered it bad taste to become sentimental over a love-affair.

"Who is the fortunate fair?" I lightly enquired.

"You shall see her," he replied, his eyes wandering absently over the crowd flowing through the street. "I will take you there at once if you are inclined."

"Can one go thus unceremoniously without being better dressed? I have actually forgotten my gloves."

"She is no countess," said he, a slight blush shewing through his dark complexion. "Just think! yesterday when I wanted to look once more through the Evening Times--yes, I know we are not to speak of it, but it has to do with the whole thing--chance, or my good star led me to a quite out-of-the-way little cake-shop, and there--"

He stopped short.

"There you found her eating cherry-tarts, and that won your affection," laughed I. "Well, Bastel, I congratulate you. Sweets to the sweet. But have you already made such way as to be able to calculate upon finding her again at the very same place?"

He gave no further reply. My tone seemed to be discordant with his mood. So indeed it at once became with my own, but my principles did not allow me to express myself more feelingly. Minor chords remained the exclusive property of verse; conversation was to be carried on in a harsh and flippant key, the more coldblooded and ironical the better.

We had walked, in silence for the most part, all the length of Frederick Street to the Halle Gate, I, for all my air of indifference, actually consumed with curiosity and sympathy, when my friend suddenly turned up one of the last side streets that debouch into the main artery of the great city. Here were found at the time I am speaking of,

several small one-storied private houses of mean exterior, a few shops, little traffic, so that the rattling of cab wheels sufficed to bring the inhabitants to their windows; and numbers of children who played about freely in the street, not having to take flight before the approach of any heavily-laden omnibus. When almost at the end of this particular side-street we came to a halt before a small house painted green, and having above its glass-door a large and dusty black board with the word "Confectionery" in tarnished gilt letters. To the right and left of this door were windows, with old brown blinds closely drawn, although the house was not on the sunny side of the street. I can see the landscape on those blinds to this hour! A ruined temple near a pond, on which a man with effaced features sat in a boat angling, while a peacock spread his tail on the stump of a willow tree. The glass door in the middle looked as though it had not been cleaned for ten years, and its netted curtain, white once no doubt, was now by reason of age, dust, and flies, pretty much the colour of the blinds.

I was startled when Sebastian prepared to enter this un-inviting domicile: however I took care not to ruffle him again, and followed his lead in no small excitement.

We were greeted by a hot cloying smell, which under ordinary circumstances would instantly have driven me out again, a smell of old dough, and fermenting strawberries, mingled with a flavour of chocolate and Vanilla, a smell that only an inveterate sweet-tooth or a youth in love could by possibility have consented to inhale! Added to this, the room was not much more than six feet high, and apparently never ventilated, except by the chance opening of the door. How my friend could ever have expected to find the Dresden Evening Times in such an out-of-the-way shop as this was a puzzle to me. Very soon, however, I discovered what it was that had lured him again--spite of his disappointment--into this distressing atmosphere. Behind the small counter on which was displayed a limited selection of uninviting tarts and cakes, I could see in the dusky window-seat behind the brown blind, a young girl dressed in the simplest printed cotton gown possible, her thick black hair just parted and cut short behind, a piece of knitting in her hands, which she only laid down when after some delay and uncertainty we had determined upon the inevitable cherry-tarts. My friend who hardly dared to look at her, still less to speak, went into the narrow, dark, and most comfortless little inner room, where the "Vossische Journal," and the "Observer on the Spree" outspread on a round table before the faded sofa, kept up a faint semblance of a reading-room. A small fly-blinded mirror hung on the wall between the two wooden-framed lithographs of King Frederick William III. and Queen Louise, over which was a bronzed bust of old Blücher squeezed in between the top of the stove and the low ceiling and looking gruffly down.

Sebastian had thrown himself in feverish haste into one corner of the

sofa, I into the other, when the young girl came in with the small plates for the tarts. I was now able to look at her leisurely, for she waited to light a gas-burner, it being already too dark to read. She was rather short than tall, but her figure was so symmetrical, so round, yet slender, that the eye followed her every movement with rapture, spite of her unbecoming, and almost ugly dress. Her feet, which were made visible to us by her standing on tip-toe to reach the gas burner, were daintily small as those of a child of ten, her little deft snow-white fingers looked as if they had always rested on a silken lap. What white things she had on, a small upright collar, cuffs, and a waitress's apron, were so immaculately clean as to form a striking contrast with the stained carpet, dusty furniture, and traces of the flies of a hundred summers visible on all around.

I ought, I am aware, to attempt some sketch of her face, but I despair beforehand. Not that her features were so incomparably beautiful as to defy the skill of any and every artist. But what gave the peculiar charm to this face of hers, was a certain spirituality which I found it no easy matter to define to myself, a calm melancholy, a half-shy, half-threatening expression, a springtide bloom, which, having suddenly felt the touch of frost, no longer promised a joyous fruitful summer; in short, a face that would have puzzled and perplexed more mature decipherers of character, and which could not fail to make an irresistible impression upon a dreamer of sixteen.

"What is your name, Fräulein, if I may venture to ask?" said I, by way of opening the conversation, my friend seeming as though he had no more important object than the mere consuming of tartlets.

"Lottka," replied the girl without looking at me, and already preparing to leave the room.

"Lottka!" cried I. "How do you come to have this Polish name?"

"My father was a Pole."

And then she was back again in the shop.

"Would you have the kindness, Miss Lottka, to bring me a glass of _bishop_." I called after her.

"Directly," was her reply.

Sebastian was studying the advertisements in the "Vossische Journal" as though he expected to meet with the real finder of his lost heart there! I turned over the "Observer." Not one word did we exchange.

In three minutes in she came again, bringing a glass of dark red wine on a tray. I could not turn my eyes away from her white hands, and felt

my heart beat while gathering courage to address her again.

"Will you not sit a little with us, Fräulein?" said I. "Do take my place on the sofa, and I will get a chair."

"Thank you, sir," she replied, without any primness, but at the same time with almost insulting indifference, "my place is in the shop. If there is anything I can do for you--"

"Do remain where you are," I insisted, venturing to catch hold of one of her hands which felt cool and smooth, and instantly slipped out of my grasp. "These newspapers are horribly dull. Allow us to introduce ourselves. My friend here, Mr. ----"

At that moment the shop-door opened, a little girl pushed shyly in, with two copper coins in her small fist, for which she wanted some sweeties. Our beauty availed herself of this opportunity of declining our acquaintance, and after having served the child, sat down again in her window-corner and took up her knitting.

Our position grew more and more unbearable. As to the tarts they were eaten long ago, and I had, partly out of embarrassment, and partly to give myself the air of an experienced wine-bibber, tossed off my glass of bishop at a draught, and now sat with burning brow and wandering mind, looking at the flies crawling along the glass's edge, and intoxicating themselves with the crimson drops. Sebastian was as silent as an Indian Fakir, and seemed to be listening intently to what was going on in the shop, where indeed there was not a sound to be heard, except now and then the click of the knitting-needles against the counter.

"Come, you trappist," said I at length, "we will pay our bill and get some fresh air. My lungs are as it were candied. For any one but a fly this atmosphere is insupportable."

"Good-bye, pretty child," said I at the counter with all the importance of a roué of sixteen, who has a volume of lyrical poems at home written in the style of Heine, and ready for the press. "I hope that we may improve our acquaintance at some future time when you are less absorbed. Au revoir!"

I should no doubt have indulged in greater absurdities, but that she looked at me with so strangely absent an expression that I suddenly felt ashamed of my impertinence, made her a low bow, and hurried out into the street. Sebastian followed me instantly; he had hardly dared to look at her.

"Now then," he said, as we rushed along through the silent street, "what do you say?"

"That the bishop is very fair, but the tarts execrable. I cannot understand how you forced your portion down as well as half of mine. I suspect that confectioner's shop of only selling old cakes bought second-hand."

"What of that?" growled he. "I did not ask about such things. I want to know what you think of _her_."

"My good friend," I returned in an authoritative and fatherly tone.

"What can one say about a girl who is able to breathe in that atmosphere! Woman is ever an enigma as you well know."

(He nodded assent and sighed; I had contrived--God knows how--to pass with him as a great discerner of feminine spirits, and was fond of introducing into my generalisations the word "Woman," which has always a mystical charm for youths of our age.)

"This monosyllabic creature--that she is enchanting it is impossible to deny! But I warn you against her, Bastel. Believe me, she has no heart."

"You think so?" he interpolated in a horrified tone without looking at me.

"That is to say she has either never had one, or destiny has changed it into stone in her breast. Otherwise would she so coldly have turned away when I addressed her? She has a past I tell you, perhaps a present also, but no future."

This stupendous sentence of mine thrown off in mere thoughtlessness produced an unexpected effect upon my chum. He started as though a snake had bitten him, snatched his arm out of mine and said--

"You think then that she--that she no longer--in a word you doubt her virtue?"

I saw now the mischief I had done. "Be easy, child," said I, throwing my arm over his shoulder. "Come, we must not have a scene here. We have agreed woman is an enigma. But as to character I have no grounds for suspecting hers. I only meant to say, take care that you do not get involved in an unpromising affair. For she looks like one from whom a victim would not easily escape! If you like I will keep an eye upon her, and I promise to render you every assistance that one friend can to another."

We had now reached a dark and deserted street-corner. Suddenly he embraced me, squeezed my hand as though bent on fusing it with his own, and instantly vanished up the nearest side-street.

I for my part walked home very slowly in order to grow cool and collected, but the singular form I had seen never left me for a moment. I was so feverishly abstracted at the home tea-table that my good mother grew alarmed, and sent me early to bed. When I went to my class the following morning, I found I had not prepared my Plato, and was obliged to put up with many mocking remarks from the lecturer on history in consequence of my having pushed the date of the battle of Cannæ a good century too far back. The day was wet, and I lounged down the street full of depression and _ennui_. Sebastian kept himself out of sight. I stood an hour at the window on which he had drummed " _Non più andrai_ " the day before, and looked meditatively at the rain-pools in the street below, out of which the sparrows were picking a few oat-husks. I heard the horses stamping in the stable, and the stable-boy whistling Weber's "Jungfern Kranz" and found myself suddenly whistling it too, and stamping the while. I felt so absurd and pitiable that tears nearly came. At length I armed myself with an umbrella, and ran out into the wet and windy street.

I had been invited to a party at a friend's house for that evening, but I had an hour to spare. And this hour, I thought, could not be better spent than in sauntering through the street where the confectioner's shop stood, and patrolling a short time on the other side to watch who went in. As it was already growing dusk I felt pretty well concealed under my umbrella, but all the same I was conscious of a certain agreeable mysterious sensation as though playing an important part in some deed of honour. In point of fact, however, there was nothing remarkable to be seen. The shop seemed to be pretty well frequented, but only by a humble class of customers, children, schoolboys intent upon devouring their pocket money, coughing old women going in for a penny-worth of lozenges. Dangerous young men did not seem aware that behind those brown blinds lurked a dangerous young girl.

Much relieved by the result of my observation, I finally crossed the street just to find out whether there were any possibility of peeping in. The gas was lit in both rooms, but the shop-window was so well-protected that one could see nothing whatever from without. But on the other hand the blind of the reading-room had a crack just across the back of the angler. So I stood and looked in, a good deal ashamed of myself for spying. And there, on the very same corner of the sofa that he occupied yesterday, sat my poor friend Sebastian before an empty plate covered with flies, his eyes wandering beyond the newspaper into empty space. A singular thrill came over me, half jealousy, half satisfaction, at his having got on no further. Just as I was watching him, he made a movement as if to take up his cap and leave. I drew back from the window, and crept along the houses like a thief who has had the narrowest escape of capture. When I got to the house where I was expected, I had of course to collect my wits. I was more lively than usual, and paid my court to the daughters of the house with all the

awkward nonchalance of a man of the world of sixteen, nay, I even allowed myself to be persuaded to read out my last poem, and drank several glasses of strong Hungarian wine, which made me neither wiser nor more modest. When ten o'clock struck, I suddenly took my departure under the pretext of an appointment with a friend. To keep late hours seemed to me congruous with the character of a youthful poet. Had people but known that the real engagement was the copying out fair a German essay, all the halo would have vanished!

And as it was that luckless essay fared badly enough. The night was wondrously beautiful. After long-continued rain, the air was as soft and exquisitely still as a human heart just reconciled to a long-estranged friend (I involuntarily fall back into the lyrical style of those early days!), and the sky sparkled and shone with thousands of newly-washed stars. In spite of the lateness of the hour, girls and women went chattering through the streets without hat or shawl, with merely a kerchief thrown over their heads, as though the lovely night had enticed them out just to inhale, before going to bed, one draught of fresh air after the discomfort of the day. Every window stood open, the roses gave out their fragrance; one heard Mendelssohn's "Songs without words" played on the piano, or some sweet female voice quietly singing to itself.

How it happened I did not know, but all of a sudden there I was again at the little shop, and had hold of the door handle before I could make out even to myself what it was that led me there.

As I entered, Lottka raised her head from the counter where it had been resting on her arm. Her eyes shewed that she had been asleep. The book, over which she had been tiring herself, fell from her lap as she rose.

"I have disturbed you, Miss Lottka," said I. "Forgive me, I will go away at once. I happened to be passing by--and as the night was so beautiful--as since yesterday you--Would you be so kind as to give me a glass of bishop, Miss Lottka?"

Strange that my usually reckless eloquence should so regularly fail me in the presence of this quiet creature!

"What have you been reading?" I began again after a pause, walking the while up and down the shop. "A book from the lending library? Such a torn shabby copy is not fit for your small white hands. Allow me--I have a quantity of charming books at home--romances too--"

"Pardon me," she quietly rejoined. "I have no time to read romances. This is a French Grammar."

"You are studying by yourself then?"

"I already speak it a little, I wish to understand it more thoroughly."

She relapsed into silence, and began to arrange the plates and spoons.

"Miss Lottka," said I after an interval, during which I had regained courage from a contemplation of the gruff old Blücher in the smaller room. "Are you happy in the position that you occupy at present?"

She looked at me out of her large weary eyes with the amazement of a child in a fairy-tale when suddenly addressed by a bird.

"How come you to put such a question?" she enquired.

"Pray do not attribute it to heartless curiosity," I went on, in my excitement upsetting a small pyramid of biscuits. "Believe that I feel a genuinely warm interest in you-- If you need a friend--if anything has happened to you--you understand me-- Life is so sad, Miss Lottka--and just in our youth--"

I was floundering deeper and deeper, and the drops stood on my brow. I would have given a good deal if that old Blücher had not encouraged me to make this speech.

However I was spared further humiliation. The door leading from the interior of the house opened, and the person to whom the shop belonged made her appearance. She seemed a good-natured square woman, with a thick cap-border, who explained to me as civilly as she could, that I had already remained a quarter of an hour beyond the usual time of shutting up, for that she was in the habit of putting out the gas at half-past ten. Accordingly I paid in all haste for my half-emptied glass, threw an expressive and half-reproachful glance at the silent girl, and went my way.

That night my couch was not one of roses. I made a serious attempt to finish my German essay:--"Comparison between the Antigone of Sophocles and the Iphigenia of Goethe," but what were either of these Hecubas to me? I began to scribble verses on the margin of the book, and their melody had so lulling an effect that not long after midnight I fell asleep in my chair, and in spite of the uncomfortable position never woke till morning, though in my verses I had confessed myself once more in love; and what of all the untoward circumstances of the case was the darkest, in love with the heart's choice of my best friend!

This too was my first waking thought on the following morning. I remember distinctly, however, that the misfortune which I clearly saw to be ours, did not after all make me actually miserable, nay that it rather exalted my self-complacency and rendered me very interesting in my own eyes, as I had now a chance of personally experiencing all that I had hitherto merely read of. I was never tired of conjuring up the

disastrous and heartrending scenes to which this complication must necessarily lead, and an indefinitely pleasurable kind of pity for myself, for Sebastian, and for the innocent source of our woes suffused all my thoughts.

Instead of going to the gymnasium, where I should have had to appear without the German essay, I preferred to visit the "hedge-school" as the French say, that is to lounge about the park, and there on a lonely bench in the most out-of-the-way corner, commit my youthful sorrows to paper. Heine and Eichendorff were at that time contending for my immortal soul. On that particular morning I was not yet ripe for the irony of the "Buch der Lieder," and the tree-tops rustled too romantically above my head for the utterance of any tones but such as suited a youthful scapegrace. About noon I saw with melancholy satisfaction that the poem entitled "New Love," begun that morning, would form a very considerable addition to my volume, if it went on long at this rate.

In the afternoon when I sat, thinking no evil, in my room, and attempting to draw the profile of my secretly beloved one from memory, I heard Sebastian's step on the stair. I hastily hid away the sheet of paper, and dipped my pen in the ink-stand to seem as though I were interrupted at my work. When he entered I had not the heart to look up at him.

He too gave me a very cursory greeting, stretched himself out as usual in my arm chair, and began to smoke a short-pipe.

In about half-an-hour he asked,

"Have you been there again?"

"Yes," I replied, and seemed to be very busy looking out a word in my lexicon.

"And what do you think of her now?"

"What I think? I have not yet found out the riddle. So much, however, I know, that she is not a flesh and blood girl, but a water-nixie, a Melusina, 'cold even to her heart,' and who knows whether her very figure does not end like a mermaid's '_desinit in piscem_'?"

He sprang up. "I must beg you not to speak in such a tone!"

"Patience, old boy," said I. "Do not go and suppose that I think lightly of her. A past history she has that is quite clear. But why need there be any harm in it? Suppose there were only some misfortune, a great grief, or a great love?"

"You think so?" and he looked at me anxiously and sadly.

"I should not be at all surprised," I continued, "if she, with those precocious eyes and that wonderful composure, had already traversed the agonies of hopeless love. Do not forget her Polish father. Polish girls begin early both to excite and to feel passion. How the poor child ever got into that fly-trap, God knows. But you and I together should find it difficult to deliver her out of it."

After that followed a silent quarter of an hour, during which he turned over my MS. poems.

"I should like to copy out this song," he suddenly said, reaching out a page to me.

"What for?" asked I. "Bastel, I half suspect you want to pass it off as your own."

"Shame upon you!" returned he with a deep flush, "I give myself out for a poet! But I have a tune running in my head; it is long since I have composed anything."

"Look out something better and more cheerful. What could you make of that feeble-minded whimper? That song is half a year old" (dated from that 'olden time' that I could not myself distinctly remember!)

He had taken back the sheet, and was now bending over it, being somewhat short-sighted, and singing in a low voice the following verses to a simple pathetic melody:

"How could I e'er deserve thee,
By serving long years through;
Though thou wert fain to own me,
Most steadfast and most true.
Or what though high exalted,
Though glory were my meed:
Love is a free gift from above,
Desert it will not heed.

"Thou tree with head low bending,
Thy blossoms may prove vain;
Who knows if God will send thee
The blessing of his rain?
Thou heart by joy and anguish
Proved and refined indeed:
Love is a free gift from above,
Desert it will not heed."

He sprang up, just gave me an absent nod, and rushed out of the room.

Not long after I went out myself. I had no particular object, except to quiet the tumult in my veins by bodily fatigue.

After walking with great rapidity about the town for an hour or so, I found myself unintentionally in the neighbourhood of the mysterious street. It attracted and repelled me both. I had a dim consciousness of not having played a very creditable part the night before. I was pretty sure that the young stranger who had so zealously offered himself as her knight, would be greeted by a satirical smile by Lottka. But that was reason the more, I argued, for seeking to give her a better impression of me. And therefore I plucked up courage, and rapidly turned the corner.

At the same moment I was aware of my friend and rival, his cap pressed down on his brow, advancing with great strides towards the small green house, from a contrary direction. He too was aware of me, and we each of us came to a halt and then turned sharp round the following moment as though we had mistaken our way.

My heart beat wildly. "Shame upon our ridiculous reserve and suspicion of each other!" I inwardly cried, feeling that if this went on I should soon hate my best friend with my whole heart.

I was in the angriest of moods while retracing my steps, and reflected whether the wisest and most manly course would not be to turn round again and take my chance even if a whole legion of old friends stood in my way. Had I not as much right as another to make a fool of myself about the girl? Was I timidly to draw back now after speaking out so boldly yesterday and offering myself as champion to the mysterious enchantress? Never! I'd go to her at once though the world fell to pieces!

I turned in haste--there stood Sebastian. In my excitement I had not even heard his quick steps following me.

"You here!" I cried in counterfeit amazement.

"Paul," he replied, and his melodious voice slightly trembled. "We will not act a part. We--we have been fond of each other, you and I. But believe me if this were to go on I could not stand it. I know where you are going: I was bound the same way myself. You love her--do not attempt to deny it. I found it out at once."

"And what if I do love her?" cried I, half-defiant and half-ashamed. "I confess that the impression she has made on me--"

"Come here under the gateway," said he. "We are blocking up the way, and you speak so loud you will attract attention. You see I was right;

indeed I should have been surprised if it had not turned out thus. But you will agree that it is impossible to go on. One or other must retire."

"Very well," returned I, endeavouring to assume an inimical and dogged expression. "One of us must retire. Only I do not see why it should be I. Just because I am the younger by two stupid years, though as advanced a student as yourself."

I had hardly spoken the hasty heartless words before I regretted them. At that moment they sounded like a humiliating boast.

"Besides," I hastily added, "it does not signify so much which of us takes precedence, as who it is she cares for. At present you and I seem to have equally poor prospects."

"That is true," he said. "But none the less I cannot find it in my heart to enter into a contest with you; and then you are the bolder, the more fluent, I should give up the game beforehand if we were both to declare our feelings for her: you know what I mean."

"If this be so," I rejoined, looking with artificial indifference through the dark gateway into a garden where a lonely rose-tree blossomed; "if you have not more confidence in yourself than this, you cannot after all be so much in love as you suppose, and as I can fairly say I am. I have spent a sleepless night" (I did not reckon those seven hours snatched in a chair) "and a wasted day. And so I thought--"

I could not end my sentence. The pallor of his good, true-hearted face shewed me how much more deeply he was affected by this conversation than I, for whom indeed it had a certain romantic charm. I felt fond of him again.

"Listen," said I, "we shall never get on this way. I see that neither of us will retire of his own free will. Fate must decide."

"Fate?"

"Or chance if you prefer it. I will throw down this piece of money. If the royal arms are uppermost, you have won; if the inscription--"

"Do so," he whispered. "Although it would be fairer--"

"Will you cry done?"

"Done!"

The coin fell to the ground. I stooped down in the dim light we were standing in to make sure of the fact.

"Which is uppermost?" I could hear him murmur, while he leaned against the door-post. He himself did not venture to look. "Bastel," said I, "it cannot be helped. The inscription is uppermost. You understand that having once appealed to the decision of Providence--"

He did not move, and not a sound escaped his lips. When I drew myself up and looked at him, I saw that his eyes were closed, and that he stood as if in a trance.

"Don't take it so to heart," said I. "Who knows but that in two or three days I may come and tell you that she does not suit me, that the field is open for you, and that--"

"Good night," he suddenly whispered, and rushed away at full speed.

I only remained behind for a moment. At this abrupt departure the scales fell from my eyes. I was conscious that my feelings for the mysterious being were not to be compared with his, and that I should be a villain if I were to take advantage of this foolish appeal to chance.

In twenty yards I had caught him up, and had to employ all my strength to keep hold of him, for he was bent on getting away.

"Hear me," I said. "I have changed my mind. Nay, you must hear me, or I shall believe you were never in earnest in your friendship for me. I solemnly swear, Bastel, that I make way for you. I resign utterly and for ever, every wish and every hope. I see it all clearly. You could not recover it if she were to prefer me. I--why I should make up my mind! You know one does not die of it even if all one's dream-blossoms do not come to fruit. Give me your hand, Bastel, and not another word about it."

He threw himself on my breast. I meanwhile feeling very noble and magnanimous, as though I had renounced a kingdom to which I was heir, in favour of some cousin belonging to a collateral line. Any one who had seen us walking on for an hour hand in hand, and been aware that we were disposing of a fair creature who had probably never given either of us a thought, could hardly have refrained from laughing at so shadowy an act of generosity. I insisted upon accompanying him at once to the shop. I was bent upon proving that my sacrifice did not exceed my strength. "Success to you!" I cried, as he turned the handle of the door, and I shewed him a cheerful face. And then I went away wrapped in my virtue, whose heroic folds were full compensation for all that I had resigned.

I slept so soundly that night, that I felt ashamed of myself the next morning for not having dreamed of her. Could it be that the flame of this "new love" had gone out thus suddenly, not leaving so much as a

spark behind? I would not allow it to myself, and thereby diminish the importance of so tragic a collision. As it was Sunday I had plenty of time to give myself up undisturbed to my happy-unhappy sensations. A few verses written down that morning still linger in my memory:

"Sad and consumed by envious desire,
A Cinderella sits beside the fire:
The hearth grows cold, the ashes fly about,
There is no sunshine in the air without.

"Oh strange that friendship should so cruel prove
As to inflict a pang on yearning _Love_:
Pale and half-blind she weeps the long hours thro',
Yet are they children of one mother too!

"Love decks herself and proudly lifts her head;
More and more glows her cheek's soft rosy red:
The pale one bears the weight of household care,
In games and dances never claims a share.

"Yet when her sister comes home late at night,
Poor Cinderella laughs and points with spite:
'Blood's on your shoe for all you're gaily drest,'
And thus she robs the proud one of her rest!"

And yet people persist in calling youth the time of unclouded bliss--youth, which through mere mental confusions and self-invented tortures lets itself be cheated out of heaven's best gifts; counterfeits feelings in order to achieve unhappiness, and passionately presses the unattainable to its heart!

* * * * *

About a fortnight may have sped away without my ever seeing my fortunate rival except by accidental glimpses. From some delicate scruple, for which I gave him full credit, he left off climbing the stair to my study as heretofore, and if we met in the streets we soon parted with a commonplace word or two, and a pretty cool shake of the hand.

However, by the time we reached the third week, this estrangement became intolerable to me. It was holiday time; the days were too hot for work or exercise, and I even found the Castalian fount run dry. I became aware that the silent presence of my friend had grown to be a positive want. I longed even to hear his deep voice sing once more, "I think in the olden days," and was as uncomfortable in my isolation as Peter Schlemihl when he had lost his shadow.

At last I determined to seek him out. He lived the other side of the Spree in an upper room of a house belonging to a tailor's wife, by whom his cooking was done, and his few wants attended to. I must just mention here that he received a very small allowance from his family, and made up the deficit by giving music-lessons, for which indeed he was but poorly paid.

When I entered his little room he was sitting at an old, hired piano, and writing down some notes in a music-book on his knee. He jumped up with an exclamation of pleasure, let the book fall, and caught hold of my hand in both his. He made me sit down on the hard sofa and light a cigar, and spite of all I could say, would have me drink a glass of beer which the tailors wife fetched from the nearest tavern. At first we said but little, as was our wont, but often looked at each other, smiled, and were heartily glad to be together again.

"Bastel," said I at length, shrouding myself as completely as I possibly could in tobacco-smoke, "I have a confession to make. You need no longer keep up any reserve with me about--you know what. The wound inflicted by a certain pair of eyes" (again the old lyrical style, this time with a touch of Spanish colour), "either was not so deep as I at first believed it, or else absence has done wonders. Suffice it that I am perfectly recovered, and if you have turned these last weeks to good account and been made happy, I shall rejoice with you unqualifiedly."

He looked at me with beaming eyes. "Is it really so?" he said. "Well, then, I can tell you, you remove a great weight from my heart. I have reproached myself a hundred times for accepting your sacrifice, and my best hours with her have been embittered by the thought of having done you wrong. I did not indeed feel sure that you would have been satisfied with what made me so happy. And besides I felt that it would have been wholly impossible for me to have renounced her. But now--now all is right."

And again he pressed my hand, his joy so genuine and touching that I felt myself and my artificially excited feelings, very small indeed in comparison.

He then went on to tell me how far matters had advanced. It certainly did require a modest nature, and a very sincere affection, not to be rather disheartened than encouraged by the amount of progress made in the course of three entire weeks. He had gone evening after evening, to spend an hour in that small reading-room. It was plain that his silent reverential homage had touched her, and the last few evenings she had permitted herself to sit with him, and keep up an innocent chat. Once even, when he was two hours later than usual, she received him with evident agitation, and confessed that his delay had made her anxious. She had become, she said, so accustomed to their daily talk, and as

there was no one else who took the least interest in her; and then she stopped--perhaps because he too vehemently expressed his delight at this her first kind word. He, for his part, had told her all about his relations, and everything connected with himself that could in any way interest her. But she had not confided to him the very slightest particulars about her family or her past history, had only said how she was pining in this dark shop-corner, and longed to go far away into foreign lands. She had been putting by, she told him, for a year past to meet travelling expenses; and privately teaching herself both French and English in order to go into the wide-world at the first opportunity. "If you had only seen her, Paul," said he at the end of his narrative, "and only heard her voice, how sadly and resignedly she told me all this, you would have pledged your life that no evil thought had ever stirred her heart, that she was as pure and innocent as saints and angels are said to be, and you would understand my resolve to leave nothing undone in order to make her happy."

"You really then mean to marry her?"

"Can you doubt it? That is if she will accept me. She must have plainly seen that my intentions were honourable, although, as to any formal declaration, you know that my heart overflows least when it is fullest. And besides there is no hurry. She cannot be thinking of leaving for some time to come, and as for me--if I make great efforts in four or five years--"

"Four or five years? Why, you will scarcely have passed your legal examination."

"True," he rejoined. "But I have given up the idea of it. I shall not seat myself on the long bench of law students, which is but a rickety one after all. I think I can in a shorter time make something of music, and at the worst if we are not able to get on here--and indeed my parents would hardly be pleased at the marriage--we can seek our fortune in America."

I looked at him sideways with pride and amazement. He seemed to me to have suddenly grown ten years older, and I confessed to myself that all the lyrical enthusiasm of my views of life, would not have rendered me capable of so bold a plan.

"And she," I asked; "will she consent to this?"

"I do not know," he replied, looking straight before him. "As I told you before, I have never asked her point-blank. Our talk once turned on marriage. She said most positively she should never marry. 'Not if the right man appeared?' I ventured to put in. 'Then least of all,' said she suppressing a sigh. So one of us is wise it seems."

"Nonsense," said I. "All girls say the same to begin with. Afterwards they think better of it."

"It seems, too, that she is a year older than we thought--only a month younger than I am. Apropos, I have a request to make to you; that is, if you are able--"

"Come, no preamble. You know that I am never shy of asking you to do me a favour."

"To-morrow is her birthday. I had just contrived to find out the date, when she said that she already felt herself very old, and was weary of life. That if she knew she were to die on the morrow it would give her no regret. I was busy just when you came in, writing out the air of one of your songs: you know the one beginning, 'How could I e'er deserve thee?' and I meant to give her a nosegay with it. But it does grieve me to think that I have nothing better to offer her. She has her dress fastened with an old black pin, and its glass head is cracked. A little brooch would be sure to please her--only unluckily my piano and singing lessons are over just now, most of my pupils are away, and so I cannot get at some fees that are owing; and to sell any of my effects is impossible, since all the superfluities I had--"

He looked with sad irony around his bare apartment.

"We must contrive something," I said. "It stands to reason that the birthday must be duly honoured. Certainly I am no Cr[oe]sus at this moment,"--and therewith I drew out a very small purse from my pocket, in which rattled only a few insignificant coins--"but at all events I have some superfluities. It now occurs to me that I have not used the great _Passow_ for some months, never indeed, since I accidentally discovered little _Rost_ at my father's, in which one can hunt out words so much more conveniently. Come! The old folios will help us out of a difficulty."

After a few weak endeavours to prevent my laying this offering upon the altar of friendship, he accompanied me to my room, and then we each loaded ourselves with a volume of the thick lexicon. And an hour later, richer by five dollars, we betook ourselves to the shop of a small working-goldsmith, as we had not courage to make our intended purchase at one of the great jewellers of _Unter den Linden_.

It is probable that our man taxed us no less heavily. But, however, he treated us like two young princes, who in Haroun-al-Raschid mood had chosen to knock at a lowly door. For a gold snake which after a few coils took its tail into its mouth, and glared at us with two square ruby eyes, he asked ten dollars, but let himself be beat down to seven, the pin being probably worth about half that sum. It was I who had to carry on the whole transaction. Sebastian was so embarrassed, and

absorbed himself so persistently in the contemplation of the other ornaments on the counter, that the shopkeeper evidently grew suspicious, and kept a sharp look out after him, as though he might be having to do with pickpockets.

"Here is the trinket," said I, when we got into the street, "and now good night, and I say--you may just congratulate her from me too to-morrow. But indeed I ought to hope that she has forgotten all about me. I certainly did not display my best side to her. Let me see you again soon, and come and tell me what effect the snake has produced in thy Paradise, happy Adam that thou art."

And so I left him, conscious of a faint glimmer of envy. But I manfully trod out the first sparks, and as I walked along the park in the cool of the evening, sang aloud the following song, which apart from the anachronism of budding roses in the dog-days, gave a pretty faithful description of the mood I was then in:

"The roses are almost full-blown,
Love flings out his delicate net:
'Thou butterfly fickle and frail
Away thou shalt never more get.'

"Ah me! were I prisoner here,
With roses all budding around,
Though satisfied Love wove the bands,
My Youth would repine to be bound.

"No musing and longing for me--
I stray thro' the woods as I will.
My heart on its pinions of joy
Soars beyond and above them still!"

The following evening I was sitting innocently and unsuspectingly with my parents at the tea-table, when I was called out of the room: a friend it seemed wished to speak to me. It was about ten o'clock, and I wondered who could be paying me so late a visit.

When I entered my room I found Sebastian as usual in the grand-paternal arm-chair, but I started when, turning the light on his face, I noticed his pallor and look of despair.

"Is it you?" cried I. "And in such agitation? Has the birthday celebration come to a tragic end?"

"Paul," said he, still motionless, as though some heavy blow had stretched him out there. "All is over! I am a lost man!"

"You will find yourself again, my good fellow," I replied. "Come, let

me help to look for you. Tell me all about it to begin with."

"No jesting if you would not drive me out of the room. I tell you it is all too true. I have only now fully discovered what an angel she is, and I have seen her for the last time."

"Is she gone away--gone to a distance?"

He shook his head gloomily. Only by very slow degrees could I extort from him the cause of his despair. Briefly it was as follows: He had found himself in the presence of his beloved at the usual hour, and after eating an extra tart and drinking a glass of bishop in honour of the day, he had brought out the gifts with which he meant to surprise her in a sequence which seemed well advised. First he had freed the bouquet from its paper coverings, and she had thanked him with a kindly glance, and put it at once in a glass of water. Then he gave her the song, and sang it for her under his voice, she sitting opposite with downcast eyes, and giving not the slightest sign by which to judge whether she saw its application or not. Only when he had ended she held out her hand--a favour of which she was chary--and said in a cordial tone: "It is very kind of you to have thought of my birthday, and to have brought me such beautiful flowers and such a charming song. There is nothing I love so much as flowers and music, and I very seldom come in for either. I shall soon know the tune; indeed I half know it now." He could not part with the hand given him, and as her graciousness had inspired him with courage, he now brought out the serpent-pin, and placed it in her hand. "Here is something else," he said; "it is but a humble offering, but I should be very happy if you would not disdain to wear it."

She looked full at him, opened the little case slowly and with evident reluctance, and as soon as she saw the shining of the gold, dropped it on the table as though the metal had been red-hot. "Why have you done this?" she said, hastily rising. "I have not deserved it from you--at least I do not think I have behaved in such a way as to authorise you to make me a present like this. I see I have been mistaken in you. You, too, think meanly of me because I am poor and dependent. I cannot conceal that this pains me, from you of all people," and her eyes grew moist. "Now I can only request that you will instantly leave me, and never return," and with that she laid the flowers and song down before him on the table, and spite of his distracted assurances and entreaties, with burning face and tearful eyes she contrived to elude him, and not only left the little inner room, but the shop as well.

It was in vain that he awaited her return; in her stead the square-built woman entered, but apparently without the least idea of what it was that had scared the young girl away. A full half-hour he continued in a most miserable state of mind to occupy his accustomed seat on the sofa. But as she remained invisible, he at length took his

departure, and once in the street, plucked the nosegay to pieces, and tore up the song into shreds, and--"There," he cried, "is that wretched pin that has made all the mischief, you may take it, and give it to whom you will! I could hardly resist the temptation as I came along to open a vein with it."

"And is that all?" enquired I coolly, when he had come to an end of his shrift.

He sprang up as if to rush away. "I see I might have spared myself this visit!" he cried. "You are in so philosophical a mood that a friend expiring at your side would seem nothing to wonder at. Good-night."

"Stay," I remonstrated. "You ought to be very glad that one of us at least has the use of his five senses. The story of the pin is a mere trifle. Who knows whether she did not reject it after all from the superstitious fancy that pins pierce friendship. Or even if there were more in it, if she actually felt a suspicion that you meant it as a bribe, that is still no cause for desperation; on the contrary she has proved that she is a good girl, and respects herself; and if you go to her in the morning as though nothing had happened, and in your own true-hearted way explain--"

"You forget she has forbidden me to return."

"Nonsense! I would bet anything that she is already very sorry she did so. Such a faithful Fridolin is not to be met with every day, and whatever she may think she feels for you--whether much or little--she would be conscious of missing something if you left off eating your two cherry tarts daily, and she no longer had to strew the sugar over them with her little white hand. Teach me to understand women indeed!"

He gazed for a long time at the lamp. "You would do me a kindness by going there with me and explaining matters for me. She would at least allow you to speak; and if you were to bear witness for me--"

"Willingly. I shall say things to her that would melt a heart of stone. Trust me, this serpent will not long exclude thee from thy Paradise, or Miss Lottka is not that daughter of Eve, which hitherto much to her honour I have held her to be."

He pressed my hand as if somewhat relieved, but was still gloomy, and I soon lighted him down the stairs.

* * * * *

I had a very beautiful and touching address all ready composed when we

set out the next evening on our common mission, and my poor friend gave me plenty of time to rehearse it, for he never said a word. When we approached the shop he drew his arm out of mine, I was not to find out that he was beginning to tremble!

I myself was not thoroughly at ease. To see her again after so long an interval, and now to address her on behalf of another--I was fully conscious of the difficulty of the position, but my honour was pledged to play my part well, and to guard against any selfish relapse into my old folly.

When we entered she was not alone. For the first time we found a fashionable-looking man in the shop, sitting on a stool close to the counter, and while drinking a glass of lemonade, trying apparently to make himself agreeable to the young attendant. Sebastian's melancholy visage darkened still more at this spectacle, although the calm manner and monosyllabic replies of the girl might have convinced him that the conversation of this coxcomb was as displeasing to her as to us.

"We shall soon drive him away," whispered I, and ordering wine and cakes with the air of an habitual customer, I together with my mute companion took possession as usual of the familiar inner-room.

I had, however, reckoned without my host. The stranger, who now carried on his conversation in a lower tone, appeared to have no idea of vacating his place in our favour. I was able to contemplate him at leisure in the small mirror that hung between the royal pair. His hair cut short round a head already bald at the top, his light whiskers, and the gold spectacles on his pinched nose, were all highly objectionable to me; and I wondered too at the insolent familiarity of his manner, and the careless way in which he crumbled a heart-shaped cake in his white effeminate hands, as if to typify his facility in breaking hearts. I took him for a young nobleman or landed proprietor, and little as I feared his making an impression upon the girl, yet it was annoying to me to see her exposed in her position to the attentions of such a man. I was even concocting some bold plan of getting rid of this incumbrance, when I felt Sebastian convulsively clutch my arm.

"What is the matter?" I said. "Are you going mad?" Instead of answering, he pointed to the mirror, in which he too could see a portion of the shop reflected. "Impudent fellow!" he muttered between his teeth, "he shall not do that a second time."

I had just time to see that the stranger was bending over the counter, and trying to take the girl--who had retreated as far as ever she could--under the chin, when my friend, having noisily pushed away the table before us, confronted him with flushed cheeks and flashing eyes.

"What do you mean, sir!" he began, and his deep voice put out all its

strength. "Who are you that you dare to take a liberty with a blameless girl--a girl who--"

His rage actually choked him. He stood with hand raised, as if determined to punish any fresh act of audacity on the spot, while the stranger, who had drawn back a step, measured this unexpected champion from top to toe with a look, half amazement, and half compassion.

"The bishop is too strong for your head, young friend," said he in a sharp tone, while he twirled his smart cane between finger and thumb. "Go home before you talk further nonsense, and be more careful another time, for you may not always meet with persons who can take your greenness into proper account. What I was saying to you, Lottka--"

And therewith he turned as if his opponent had already vanished out of sight and mind, and addressed the girl, who, pale as death and with eyes closed, was leaning back in the furthest corner between the window and the wall.

I had followed Sebastian, and whispered to him to take care what he was about, but he never heard me.

"I only wanted to ask you, Fräulein," he said in a hollow voice, "whether it is with your consent that this gentleman allows himself to take such liberties with you as are not generally permitted by respectable young ladies; whether you know him sufficiently well to justify him in using your Christian name, and whether it is agreeable to you that he should remain talking to you so long?"

She did not answer. She only raised her large eyes entreatingly to the angry lover who did not understand their glance.

"Who is this amiable youth, who plays the part of your knight, Lottka?" now asked the stranger in his turn. "I begin to suspect that I have interfered with some tender relations between you. I am sincerely sorry for it, but still, my child, without venturing to impugn your taste, I would advise you in future to pay more attention to solid advantages in the choice of your adorers. The declamations of schoolboys are no doubt pretty to listen to, but they may lead as you see to awkward consequences. What do I owe?"

He threw a dollar on the table.

"You can give me the change another time. I will not disturb you further just now."

He took his hat and was about to leave when Sebastian barred the way.

"You shall not go," said he in a constrained voice, "before you have in

my presence apologised to this young lady, and given your word of honour never again to forget the respect due to her. I hope you understand me."

"Perfectly, my young friend," replied the other, his voice now trembling with excitement. "I understand that you are a crazy enthusiast, and take the world for a raree-show. I do not grudge you your childish amusement, and esteem you accordingly; but I have no wish further to prosecute your acquaintance, lest a joke should turn to earnest, and I should be forced--spite of the lady's presence--to treat you like a young whippersnapper who--"

Here he made a pretty unequivocal movement with his cane. I had just time and sense enough to interfere.

"Sir," said I, "I have to request your card; we can best settle this matter in another place."

He laughed loud, drew out his pocket-book with an ironical bow, and reached me a visiting-card. Then he nodded familiarly to the girl, shrugged his shoulders, and pressing his hat low down on his brow, left the shop.

We three remained for several moments in the same position as if we had been touched by a magic wand.

I as the least deeply implicated was the first to recover myself.

"For God's sake, Fräulein," said I to the pale statue in the window, "tell us who this man is. How comes he to behave so to you? Since when have you known him?" Then in a lower tone. "I pray you by all that is good, speak, if but one word. You see the state my friend is in; this concerns him more deeply than you are aware. You do not perhaps know that there is nothing more sacred to him than yourself; you owe it to him--"

He seemed to have heard what I said. With a sudden gesture as though shaking off some heavy weight, he tottered to the counter, behind which she stood entrenched and unapproachable.

"Only one word, Lottka," he murmured. "Do you know that insolent man? Have you ever given him cause so to think of and speak to you? Yes or No, Lottka?"

She was silent, and her hands hung down helplessly by her side. I could plainly see two great tears forcing their way between her lashes.

"Yes or No, Lottka," he repeated more urgently, and his breast heaved fast. "I wish to know nothing further. Do not imagine that the first

rude fellow I come across, has any power to shake my holiest convictions. But how was it you had not a word to crush him with? Why are you silent now?"

A convulsive shiver passed over the young girl's frame. With eyes still closed she felt for her chair in the window, but did not seat herself--sank down on her knees beside it, and hid her face against it. "I beseech you," she murmured in an almost inaudible voice, "do not ask anything about me--go away--never come here again. If it can in any way comfort you, I am innocent so surely as God lives; but so unfortunate that it is almost worse than if I were a sinner too. Go away. I thank you for all you have done, but go, and forget that I am in the world. I would I were in another!"

"Lottka!" cried Sebastian wildly, about to rush in and raise her up, but that she put out her hands to ward him off with such a lamentable gesture that I held him back; and after a struggle, during which I represented to him that they were both too excited at present to understand each other, I persuaded him to leave the poor child to herself, and we went off, promising to return on the morrow.

We walked in silence through the streets. It was impossible to tell him that the scene we had witnessed had considerably shaken my faith in his beloved. For the rest I was perfectly satisfied with the part he had played, and owned to myself that I should have done just the same in his place.

It was only when we reached the door of my house that he broke silence. "You must do me the favour," he said, "to go to that man very early in the morning" (we had read his name and address on his card; he was an assessor at the Town Court). "I leave all details to you."

"Of course," I returned, "it stands to reason that I should do all I can for you; but in this matter--I have never delivered a challenge, and have only twice seen a duel of any kind; and in this case, as I believe, we must employ pistols. If you knew any one more conversant with such matters?--one would like to do things in the regular way with a fellow like this, who treats us both like schoolboys."

"You are probably right," said he. "But there is no help for it. I can have no third party admitted into this affair. It is possible that he may make some disclosures to you--invent more calumnies--how should I know? So everything must be kept to ourselves. I shall be at home all the morning, and as soon as you have done with him you will come straight to me, will you not?"

That I promised, and we parted. What my parents must have thought of me that evening, when I gave crooked answers to every question put, Heaven only knows.

* * * * *

That night in good truth I really slept very little. I kept thinking of all that might ensue, hearing pistol-shots fired, and seeing my poor friend fall. But I was also much engaged in puzzling over Lottka's conduct, and came more and more strongly to the belief that she was not worth an honest true-hearted youth throwing down the gauntlet in her cause, and answering for her virtue with his life.

The day had scarcely dawned before I was up, but on this occasion I had no idea of verse-making. I dressed myself at first entirely in black like an undertaker's assistant; then it occurred to me it might be better to be less carefully got up, and rather to treat the matter with indifference, as though such things daily occurred to me. So I merely put on a comfortable summer attire, just substituting a black hat for the cap I usually wore, and drawing on a pair of perfectly new gloves. When I looked in the glass, I viewed myself as decidedly grown up, and also decidedly easy-going and dignified. But for all that I could make nothing of my breakfast. I had a bitter taste on my tongue.

About nine o'clock I set out. The house in which our enemy lived stood in the best part of the town, and the porter told me he did not think it would be easy to get an interview with the assessor. Nevertheless a footman, although certainly treating me rather *_de haut en bas_*, ushered me into a small room, and signified that his master would soon appear.

I had plenty of time to look about me, and firmly resolved as I was not to be cowed by outward circumstances, I could not help feeling, while silently comparing this elegant bachelor's snuggery with the four bare walls of my friend's room, that the game was very unequal. Two raw half-fledged novices pitted against a thorough man of the world, and not even perfectly certain that we had the right on our side. I owned to myself that we were in a fair way to act a ridiculous part, and all my lyrical idealism was powerless against the awkwardness of prosaic facts.

The longer I waited, the more I made up my mind to see our enemy enter with a mocking smile, and asked myself how to meet it with becoming dignity. But to my surprise there was nothing of the kind.

In about ten minutes the door opened, and the assessor just put in his head, saying in the most urbane tone possible, that he was very sorry to be obliged to keep me waiting, not being quite dressed, but that he begged me in the meantime to use his cigars and make myself at home.

Another five minutes, and in he came, shook my hand like an old acquaintance, and begged me to be seated on his silk-covered divan. I had to light a cigarette, but declined to share his breakfast which the footman brought in on a silver tray, and I was looking out for the pleasantest introduction possible to our affair, when he anticipated me, and while pouring out his tea began in quite a friendly tone--

"I am very glad you have come. I can easily imagine what brings you, and I may frankly tell you that yesterday's scene to which I owe your acquaintance, made upon me a most painful impression. You will easily understand that it is by no means pleasant to have a youth--an utter stranger--fall upon one out of a clear sky with a perfect torrent of invective. But on the other hand, I am sufficiently versed in human nature to be able to explain the very peculiar conduct of your Hotspur of a friend. He is in love with the little girl, and in that shows very fair taste. He has diligently read romances and old legends, and thinks he has gained from them a knowledge of the world. This sweet illusion will vanish all too soon, but while it lasts it makes so happy, that it is positive cruelty to blow away its soap-bubbles prematurely. I at least would never deprive any one of his innocent enjoyment. And so I am sincerely sorry to have disturbed any tender tie. I hope your friend will be content with this explanation, and for my part I wish him pleasant dreams, and when the time comes as gentle a waking as possible. The cigar does not seem to draw well? Try another. What are you studying if I may ask? You are still a student, are you not?"

I felt myself blush crimson. For a moment I doubted whether I would not deny my position. However I stuck to the truth. "We shall pass our final examination at Easter," I said.

He was magnanimous enough not to misuse his superiority.

"So young," he said, with a good-natured shake of the head, "and already such Don Juans! You seem entitled to fair hopes, my young friend, and if you would only accustom yourself to more self-restraint--"

"Forgive me," said I, "but I must return to the matter in hand. My friend, as you rightly perceive, has a serious affection for this girl, and feels himself deeply aggrieved by the disrespectful manner in which you behaved to her. I believe he might be satisfied by a few lines in your handwriting, expressing your regret for your conduct to Fräulein Lottka. If not--"

He looked askance at me with such amazement, that I felt suddenly paralysed.

"Are you really in earnest?" he said. "You look too intelligent for me to believe that you can approve of this commission you have undertaken

for your friend. My conduct to Fräulein Lottka! That is going a little too far! No, my good friend, let us make ourselves as little absurd as we can. Have you considered what you are proposing to me? With all the respect to the honourable feelings and true-heartedness of a student of the upper class, can he seriously imagine that I owe him reparation, because in a public shop I chanced to stroke a girl under the chin." He burst out laughing, and threw the end of his cigarette out of the window.

I rose. "I doubt," I said, "that this will satisfy my friend. If you would at least declare that you know nothing of Fräulein Lottka, which casts a shadow on her reputation."

"Just sit down, and hear me out," he broke in.

"Now that I see you are really in earnest, it is my duty to tell you the truth in the interests of your friend who takes up the case so tragically, that he is sure to commit himself to some folly. About ten years ago I was acquainted with a lady of a certain character here in Berlin. She was a German, but bore a Polish name, that of her first lover, a Polish nobleman, who had left her, *_plantée là_*, with one child. As she was beautiful and not inconsolable, she found plenty of adorers, and lived in wealth, keeping a small gambling-house too; and I can well remember the strange impression it made on me when first I entered it, to see a child of eight years old sitting at the faro table, looking at the gold heaps with her great sleepy eyes, and then at her mother and her friends, till the Champagne, of which she seemed to like a sip, took effect, and she fell asleep on a sofa amidst laughter, the rattling of money, and very free talk indeed. I was sorry for the pretty child, and it crossed my mind that she could have little respect for her mother, who exercised no sort of self-control even in her presence. After a few years I broke off the connection, which proved a very expensive one, but I heard in a roundabout way that the Polish Countess--as we used to call her--went on still in her old course, except that she relied less on her own attractions, and called in younger faces to her aid. I enquired casually after her daughter, but the conversation had turned, and I received no answer.

"Well--yesterday as I chanced to be passing by that miserable cake-shop, thinking of anything else than of this old story, I saw an old lady getting into a cab at the door, while the shop-girl put in the various parcels of purchases. When she turned round to re-enter the shop, I recognized the child with the weary eyes, now grown up into a beauty, who might, if she chose, enter into formidable competition with her mother. As I had nothing particular to do, I followed her into the shop, reminded her of our old acquaintance, and was not a little surprised to find her just as rigid and unapproachable as her lady-mamma was the reverse. With all my long practice in cross-examination, I was only able to get out from her that she had

parted from her mother three years ago, but as to what she had been doing since, or through how many hands she had passed, or whether her icy manners were artificial or natural, that I had not been able to unravel, when our Orlando Furioso, your excellent friend, suddenly burst in upon us. And now, after I have given you this explanation, you may yourself judge, whether the idea of my coming forward to vouch for the poor child's character or having to fight with an enthusiastic boy about her virtue is not quite too absurd!

"No, no," he continued, "if you have any influence over your friend, my dear fellow, do warn him not to go too far. For even if the daughter were as yet perfectly pure, what good could come of it with such antecedents, and such a mother? Your friend is the son of respectable people, tell him that he must not compromise his parents and himself--a mere passing liason, *_à la bonne heure!_* but to stake his very heart's blood, and to interfere with fire and sword, *_allons donc!_*--I do hope you may be able to bring him to reason; and now you must excuse me, I have a case coming on."

He had risen, while I still sat petrified by such a revelation; then he called his servant, and after reciprocal assurances of high esteem, had me shewn out. I tottered down the steps like a drunkard.

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It was not for an hour afterwards--I needed a long circumbendibus before I could take heart to bring this melancholy business to an end--that I found myself knocking at Sebastian's door. A faint voice bade me come in, and then I found the unhappy fellow lying dressed upon his bed, and one glance at his disordered hair and attire shewed that he had spent the night in that fashion. Before I could say a word, he held out a letter that was open beside him on the pillow. A boy had brought it very early in the morning, but had not waited for an answer.

Of course I do not pretend to give the exact words in which it was couched, but their purport was as follows:

"You had scarcely left me when the idea struck me that the dispute of which I was the miserable cause, might have fearful consequences. I write to you to entreat and beseech you, if there were any earnestness in the feelings you professed for me, to let the matter drop, and to believe that in reality *_I am not worthy_*" (these words were doubly scored) "that you should sacrifice yourself for me. Promise me that you will try to forget me utterly. I am a poor lost creature, and only death can deliver me. But I shall not die yet, so have no anxiety on that head. I will try whether it be possible for me to live without my misfortune dogging every step I take. I thank you for all your love and

kindness, and I never shall forget you. But do not attempt to find me out. I am firmly resolved never to see you again, and you will only increase my misery if you do not obey my wishes, but attempt to force a meeting."

The letter had neither address nor signature, it was firmly written, and there was not a mistake throughout.

I silently returned him the letter, not liking at that moment to tell him that under the circumstances nothing could be more propitious than such a decided step on her part. But I gradually discovered that nothing in the letter impressed him so much as the pretty clear confession of her own liking for him. This it was he dwelt on; their separation seemed to him comparatively unimportant, probably not seriously resolved upon, and practically impossible.

I therefore felt myself bound no longer to keep back my information, and gave him an exact account of my interview with his enemy. To my surprise it did not seem to produce on him the overwhelming effect I had dreaded. He told me he had himself conjectured something of the kind, and much as he regretted it, it could in no way change his feelings, rather it could only increase his love to positive worship to find that she had worked herself free from such degrading relations, and was high-hearted enough to wish to bear alone a sorrow she had never deserved. He knew indeed, that he should have some obstacles to confront, as regarded his parents, friends, home, &c. But since she had plainly told him that he was dear to her, no cowardly scruples would prevent his making up to her for the sufferings brought on her by a cruel fate. If the world bespattered her pure life, he would wash it all away in his heart's blood.

He ran on in this half-feverish way, and his high-wrought enthusiasm, his innocent brave spirit so carried me along, that not only did I keep all objections to myself, but actually became of opinion that this was all exactly as it should be, and the one important matter now was to find out the young girl, and induce her to change her mind. I threw myself into a cab, and drove to the shop, hoping to get upon her track there. Sebastian remained at home; he did not venture contrary to her expressed command, to take any part in the search. We had settled to meet again at noon. Alas! I came back as ignorant as I went. The mistress of the confectionery business had only been apprised of the departure of her young shopwoman early that morning by an open note found on her table. None of the neighbours had seen her go away. Most of her effects were left behind, she had only taken with her some linen and a travelling-bag which the good woman knew her to possess, and could not now find. She had instantly given information to the police. But all in vain as yet--the poor child had utterly disappeared.

It was now that grief and the after effects of the excitement of weeks,

began to tell severely upon my poor friend. He was in such utter despair that I at first feared for his reason; not because of his frantic outbursts, or delirious grief, but from a certain suppressed wildness that tried to smile while the teeth chattered, a quite aimless way now of walking, now standing still; speaking to himself and laughing loud, while the tears, of which he seemed unconscious, rolled down his cheeks. It was the first time that I had ever seen the elemental throes of a true and deep passion, and I was so shocked that I forgot all besides, and at all events never presumed to attempt consoling the poor fellow by commonplaces.

I remained with him the whole day and a good part of the night. It was only about midnight, when I saw that he was quite exhausted (he had not closed his eyes the previous night), that I yielded to his entreaties, and consented to leave him alone, after exacting a solemn promise from his landlady to listen how he went on, for that he was very ill. I knew he had no weapons of any kind, and I hoped that sleep would do him some good.

The next morning, however, I could not rest, reproached myself for having left him, and anxiously hurried to his lodgings. But there he was no longer to be found. His landlady gave me a note of two lines, in which he bade me farewell for the present. He could not rest till he had found her, but he would do nothing rash, for he was not unmindful of his other duties, and so I might confidently expect his return.

He had packed his knapsack, and taken his walking-stick with him. And the landlady told me he seemed to have had two or three hours sleep, for that his eyes looked clearer.

This was but meagre information, but I had to content myself with it. And moreover I was about to accompany my parents on a tour which kept me absent for several weeks. To the letters I wrote--for I was always thinking of him--no answers ever came, so on my return when my first walk led me to his lodgings, I was fully prepared to find an empty nest. I was the more rejoiced, therefore, when he himself opened the door, and I met a sad face, it is true, but free from the morbidly strained expression which had so much pained me.

That he had failed to meet with any traces of the lost one I guessed rather than actually heard from him. A melancholy indifference seemed to pervade him; he set about whatever was proposed, as one who took no part in it, whether for or against,--and what to me was most striking of all, his passion for music seemed completely over. He never sang a single note, never alluded to any composition, and would willingly have given up his music-lessons, had he been able to live without them. The mainspring of his nature seemed hopelessly broken, something had got wrong which there was no repairing.

In the following spring, when we both went to the University, I used to see him almost daily. He regularly attended law lectures, and had become member of a society in which his admirable fencing and his now proverbial taciturnity rendered him prominent, and I was hoping that the incident which had so deeply affected him would after all leave no bad results in his healthy nature, when something occurred that tore open every wound anew.

I will for the sake of brevity relate the sad tale consecutively, and not as I learned it from him, bit by bit, and at long intervals.

* * * * *

It was the Christmas of 1847. He had resolved upon spending the holidays--not as usual, in paying a visit to his parents, but in the strenuous study of his law-books, a long indisposition having thrown him back considerably. I had in vain attempted to coax him to come to us for this Christmas Eve. Indeed as a rule he avoided parties, and if he ever did appear at a social gathering, he usually made an unfavourable impression, especially on ladies, because of his silence and his obstinate refusal to sing.

On this particular 24th of December, he spent the whole day hard at work in his own room, got his landlady to give him something to eat, and only went out at five o'clock when it had grown too dark to write, leaving instructions to keep up his fire, as he should only spend an hour or so looking at the Christmas market, and then return, and go on writing late into the night. When he got into the street, he felt the winter breeze refresh him. The intense cold of the last few days had somewhat abated, snow was falling lightly in large flakes, which he did not shake off, but liked to feel melting on his flushed face. His beard, which had grown into a very handsome one during the last year, and much improved his looks, was white with them.

Slowly he went through Königsstrasse to the Elector's Bridge. There were crowds of well-wrapped figures flitting about, who having made their purchases at the last moment, were now hurrying home fast, for already the windows were beginning to shine with Christmas candles. The solitary student worked his way through the throng, without that melancholy yearning for home which would, on this particular evening, have oppressed most youths, if compelled to spend it away from their own people. He had sent off presents to his parents and sisters two days ago, and this very evening expected a Christmas box from them, which, however, he felt no impatience about. No one could care less for any addition to his possessions than he did; indeed, since he had lost the one thing to which he had passionately clung, he had grown indifferent to all besides.

He stood for a while before the equestrian statue of the great elector, who in his snow mantle looked even more majestic and spectral than usual against the pale winter sky. Below, the stream, hemmed in by ice on either side, flowed darkly and silently on, and in one of the barges the bargeman had already lighted up a small Christmas tree, which sent out a radiance through the open door. A couple of red-cheeked children were standing by the lowly table, one blowing a penny trumpet, the other eating an apple, and the solitary observer on the bridge might have stood there long in contemplation of this humble idyll but that the human stream swept him along with it, and landed him in the very centre of the busy noisy Christmas market going on in the Schlossplatz.

He walked awhile up and down the chief passages between the booths, looking at the cheerful traffic of buyers and sellers, listening to the chattering of the monkeys, and the shrill screams of boys advertising their various wares; and silently he sighed, reflecting that he had positively no connection with the world in which the festival was so joyously kept, that it would be all one to him if he were suddenly transported to Sirius, amongst whose inhabitants he could not feel more alone than here. Then he suddenly resolved to cheer up, and actually hummed the tune "I think in the olden days." A garrulous saleswoman in a booth of fancy-goods now interrupted him, entreating him to look out some pretty trifle for his "lady-wife." At that he hurriedly turned off, and made for one of the less frequented alleys where small dealers were offering their penny-worths as bargains.

He had not proceeded far when a singular spectacle caught his eye. Before a booth of cheap toys stood a lady in an elegant fur-trimmed polonaise, such as were then worn, a square Polish hat on her head, and a thick veil drawn over her face to protect her from the snow, so that there was no seeing her features. She had put down her large muff on the counter before her, and with tiny hands in daintiest gloves was busy picking out various toys, and dividing them amongst a number of street-children who crowded closely about her, and struggled for these unexpected gifts in a very tumult of delight. A few expressive words on the part of the seller in the booth reduced them to something like order, and at length they all dispersed, their treasures tightly clutched in their little fists, but it was only a minority that said "thank you" to the giver.

"And now what have I to pay you for them all?" said the lady.

Her voice ran like an electric shock through the youth, who had approached unobserved.

"Lottka," he said in a whisper.

The lady turned round quickly, and her first impulse was to draw her

veil closer about her face. Then, however, by the light of the booth lamps and the glare from the snow, she was able to recognize the figure that only stood two paces off. She hurriedly paid the sum required, turned to Sebastian, and held out her hand.

"It is you," she said, without showing any special excitement. "I had not expected ever to see you again. But I am only the more glad of it. Have you any engagement? Are you expected anywhere this evening? No? Then give me your arm. I too am free--quite free," she added with a singular expression. "It is so pleasant to walk about in the snow, and see so many happy faces. It seems to me sometimes as though it could not be necessary to take any great pains to be happy since so many are so, and so cheaply too. Do you not agree with me?"

He did not reply. The utterly unexpected meeting had positively stupefied him, and the quick way in which she spoke and moved was perplexing. She had at once hung upon his arm, whereas formerly she carefully avoided every touch, and now she walked on beside him, daintily putting down her little feet in the snow, her head bent, with a bright thoughtful expression, as though planning some mysterious surprise. He only dared to steal glances at her now and then. She had evidently grown, her features were rather more marked, but that added to her beauty, and her fur cap was wonderfully becoming.

"Fräulein Lottka," said he at length, "that I should find you here! You do not know--you would not believe how I have sought for you--how ever since--"

"Why should I not believe it?" she hastily replied. "Do you suppose I have not known that you were the only human being in the world who ever really loved me? That was the very reason why I was obliged to part from you. Your love and goodness deserved something better than to be made unhappy for my sake. It is enough that one wretched life should be destroyed, and even that is not very intelligible when one thinks that there is a Providence--but why should we talk of such melancholy subjects? Tell me what you have been doing all this while. Do you know that you are much better looking than you were? Your beard becomes you so well, and with it you have the same innocent eyes that would better suit a girl's face, and yet they can look brave and resolute enough too when they flash out at a villain.

"Forgive me," she went on, "for being so talkative, but you cannot guess how long I have been silent--almost _always_, since we parted. I had too much to think about. But now I have arranged it all, and since then I am quite happy. It is not very long ago that I have done so. Last night even I had quite too horrible thoughts; they actually pierced my brain like needles of ice. So I said to myself, 'there must be an end to this.' Neither man nor God can require any one to live on with thoughts like these. And after becoming quite clear about that, my

spirits returned, and even my tongue is loosed again. But you are all the more silent. What is the matter with you? Are not you a little tiny bit glad that we can wander about together so confidentially, and feel the snow on our faces, and see so many poor men enjoying their Christmas Eve? I too wanted to make a festival for myself, and so I spent my last two dollars in an improvised Christmas gift. But it did not answer so very well either: unless one loves the person one gives to, there is not much pleasure in giving. Now I am sorry that I have no more money. You and I might so well have made presents to each other."

"O Lottka," said he, "now that I have found you again--that you are so kind to me--that you know how I love you--"

"Hush!" interposed she, "this may be felt, but not spoken of. For to-day everything is as sad as it ever was, and as utterly hopeless."

He stopped suddenly and looked full at her. "Hopeless," he groaned. "But are you aware that I know everything, and no more heed it than if it were some story going on in the moon. That I have no one in the world to consult but myself, and if my own father and my own mother--"

"For God's sake do not go on," she cried, with a look of distress, and placing her hand on his lips. "You do not know what you are saying, how horrible it is, and how you would one day repent it. You have a mother whom you can love and revere, and who loves nothing on earth better than you, and who is proud of you, and you would bring sorrow and shame on her? If you had rightly considered what that means--but we will say no more about it. Come--I will confess to you that I am hungry; since yesterday evening I have eaten nothing out of sheer disgust. I thought, indeed, I should never have a pure taste in my mouth any more, but since I have chatted so pleasantly with you, I feel much better. Take me where there is something to eat. And then we can still go on chatting away for a couple of hours, and you really must treat me, for as I said I have spent the last money I had in those toys."

At once he turned off into a side street, and rapidly led her to a small eating-house that he knew, which was generally empty at this hour. They were both lost in thought, and he was wondering, half in terror, half in rapture, at the way things had come about, and asking himself what turn they would take now. For although her dark allusions made him very anxious, yet on the other hand he found comfort in her free and frank manner towards him, and her clear recognition of his feelings for her.

"Here," said he, throwing open a small door over which a blue lamp was burning.

They entered a bright comfortable dining-room in which was only an elderly waiter with a green apron of the good old fashion, sitting

half-asleep in a corner. He looked at the pair with some surprise, and then hastened off to bring what Sebastian had ordered.

"He takes us for brother and sister," whispered the young girl.

"Or for a newly-married pair on their travels. Ah, Lottka!" and he seized one of her little hands which she had just ungloved.

She heartily but without any embarrassment returned his passionate pressure. "It is charming here," said she, beginning to free herself from her warm wraps. "I do so rejoice to be for once with you thus before I--" She stopped short.

"What are you thinking of?" he enquired in great agitation. "This is not really to be the last time--"

"Do not ask me," said she. "I am provided for, you need have no anxiety for me. When I wrote you that little note I really did not know what would become of me. It was only at first that I was safe. While you and perhaps others were looking everywhere for me, I sat up in the attic of an old friend not far from that shop--the only friend I had, an asthmatic sempstress who used often to buy cough-lozenges from me, and got fond of me because I would put in a stitch for her now and then. The poor thing when at her worst was unable for weeks together to earn anything. It was at her door that I knocked in the night, and actually I remained a couple of months hidden there, for no one concerned himself about her, and I used to help her with her sewing, and to cook our frugal meals; but at last I could no longer endure life in such a cage. I had saved a little money, and meant to cross over into France, where no one would have known me. But I was stopped on the way, there was something wrong in my passport, and so I was of course transported back like a vagrant; and here in Berlin--but we will say nothing about it. I already feel that nausea coming back, and here is our supper, and I must not let that be spoiled."

He poured out for her a glass of the wine the waiter had brought, and pledged her. "Thou and I," he whispered gently.

"No, thou alone," she replied, and sipped at the glass.

"Is the Rhine wine too strong for thee?" asked he. "Shall I order Champagne?"

She shook her head vehemently. "I could not touch a drop of it. I drank it too early, and in too bad company. But you must eat with me if I am to enjoy my supper."

He put something on his plate, though he could not get a morsel down, and kept watching her while she did full justice to their simple meal.

Her hair was cut as short as ever, her dress was quite as plain, her form so full and so supple that each movement she made was enchanting to contemplate. Every now and then she apologized for her appetite.

"It is only," she said, "because I am for once happy, and everything is so good, and we are so delightfully alone--you and I. There"--and she put a bit of game from her plate on to his--"you must positively eat that, or I shall believe you have a horror of eating from the same dish even as I. If things had been different, and we could really have travelled off together through the world--that would have been beautiful! But it cannot be, and some day you will be happy with some one else, and she with you; lots are very unequally divided, and one must put up with one's own till it gets too bad. But do pour me out some wine--I drank that last glass off unconsciously. Thanks--and now--to thy mother's health! And that shall be the last."

She emptied the glass, and as she put it down again, he noticed that she shuddered as if some ice-cold hand had suddenly grasped hold of her.

"Let us go," she said.

He paid the bill and again offered her his arm. When they got out they found that the large soft flakes had changed into a driving snow-storm, that met them full in the face.

"Where shall we go now?" asked he.

"It is all the same to me. I have no longer any home. I thought indeed--but it is quite too boisterous and wretched to take leave of each other in the open air. Are we far from your lodgings?"

"I am in the old quarters still. Over the bridge, and then only a hundred yards. Come."

"That is--" said she, holding him back as if considering. "What will the people you lodge with think if you suddenly bring a girl back with you?"

"Have you not your veil on!"

"I? I do not care about myself. To-morrow I shall be--who knows how far away, where I can defy all comments. But it might get told to your mother, and give you trouble hereafter."

"Have no fear," he said, pressing the hand that rested on his arm. "My room has a private entrance, and the people of the house burn no light on the stairs. We shall not meet any one."

With rapidly beating heart, he led her along the now deserted streets, and often they were obliged to stand still and lean against each other, while the icy blast swept by. Once when he turned his back to the storm and drew her closer to his breast, he bent down and hurriedly kissed her through her veil. She made no resistance--only said, "I think the worst is now over, we may go on." After that they did not speak another word till they reached the house.

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The steep staircase was--as he had said it would be--quite dark, and as they went up it, on tip-toe, he first, holding her hand so that she might not miss a step, no one came across them. Only they heard children's voices through the door, and saw a light shine through the key-hole of the room in the upper story, telling of a Christmas tree there.

He carefully closed his door, and let her precede him into the small dark room, which was only lit by the glow in the stove, and the reflection of the snow. He then bolted both doors. "The kitchen is next to us," he said, "but there is no one there now. We need not talk in a whisper. But the landlady may just come back once to enquire whether I want anything."

She answered nothing; she had placed herself on a chair in the window, and was looking out at the whirls of snow.

When he had lit his small student's lamp with its green shade he noticed a box on the table. "Look," said he, "that is my Christmas box from home, we can put that in a corner for the present. Will you not take off some of your wraps, and seat yourself here on the sofa? You must be too warm in your furs."

"I shall soon be going," said she. "But thou art right, the stove does burn well." And she began to draw off her polonaise, and put away her fur cap and gloves--he helping her.

"But now shall we not begin to unpack?" said she, shaking back her hair. "I should much like to know what is in the box."

"I am in no hurry," he laughingly replied. "I have just been unpacking something far more precious to me."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," returned she, suddenly assuming a colder tone (she had been saying _thou_). "You do not deserve that people should be planning how to give you pleasure. I--if a mother had sent _me_ such a Christmas box from a distance--give it me--I will undo

the string."

She hastily began cutting open the cover with a little knife of hers, and he gazed in carefully suppressed emotion at every movement of her exquisite hands.

"Lottka," said he; "if you and I were both together in America, and this box had come over the sea--"

She shook her head. "No box would have come then."

"And why not, Lottka? If my mother knew thee as I know thee, dost thou suppose she would hold thee guilty for circumstances over which thou art powerless. Naturally she has her prejudices--like all good mothers. But I know that she loves me more than any of her prejudices."

The girl left off her unpacking, and with her little knife cut all sorts of patterns on the lid of the box.

"Do you call that a prejudice?" said she, without looking at him. "Could you eat an apple that you had found lying in the dirt of the streets? You might wash it ten times over, the repugnance would be all the same. And who knows what foot might have trodden on it, who knows that some slime might not have penetrated the rind, even though it should still be sound at the core? No, no, no! It is so once for all, bad enough that so it should be--but it must not be made even worse."

He wound his arm about her, but rather like a brother than one passionately in love. "Lottka," he said, "it is impossible that this can go on. You cannot waste your life in unavailing regrets." He stopped short--he could not find words that expressed his meaning without fearing to pain her.

"In regrets," she repeated, looking at him firmly and sorrowfully. "Oh no! Who is thinking of it? I have already told you that you may be quite easy about my future. I am provided for. I am not so forsaken as I appear, provided my courage does not desert me--my courage and my disgust. And why must every one be married? If I chose I might be so, and very well too. All possible pains have been taken to make me fall in love, and I have had a choice of very desirable wooers, rich, young, and handsome, and some were really willing regularly to marry me in a regular church, with a regular clergyman in gown and bands. There was only one hitch."

"What was that?" he eagerly asked.

"It is unnecessary to mention it. But no--I will tell it to you straight out, that you may never judge me wrongly. Do you know what has given me a horror of all men except perhaps yourself! I will whisper it

in your ear. It is because I did not know whether the proposed bridegroom might not have stood too high in the mother's favour before he concerned himself about the daughter."

She turned away and went hastily to the window.

After a time she again felt his arm around her. "What you must have had to endure, dear heart!" he faintly whispered.

She nodded slowly and significantly. "More than you would suppose so young a creature could have survived. About seven years ago, when I first understood it all, I still thought I could change my lot. I would not remain another day in the house. I went out to service. I cut off all my beautiful long hair to prevent any one admiring me, and the ugliest clothes were good enough for me so only they would restore my respectability. How little it has availed me thou knowest. Later, when I was taken up as a vagrant, I was brought back to the house, to _her_ who naturally had a legal right over me. I had to bear it. I was powerless against the law. But I at once declared that I would destroy myself if I were not left in peace. And so I have sat nearly a year in my own room, and as soon as any one came near it I bolted the door. But still as I was obliged sometimes to breathe the air, people saw me, and she herself--though I never would speak a word to her--pretended that she loved me very much, and only yesterday--it was to be a Christmas treat--she sent me in a letter; guess from whom?"

"How can I guess?"

"You are right. No mortal ever could suppose it. But you remember the creature with whom you quarrelled on my behalf?"

"Lottka!" he cried beside himself. "Is it possible--"

She nodded. "It was a very affectionate letter, the most beautiful things were promised me in it--the paper smelt of Patchouli: since then I have had that nausea, that loathing which only passed off when you and I met again. But I have but to think of it, and--fie!--there it comes again!"

She wiped her lips, and the same strange shudder passed over her. He seized her hands--they were stiff and damp.

Suddenly she shook her head as if to get rid of some importunate thought. "But we were going to unpack," said she. "Pretty subjects these for Christmas Eve! Come to our box--_ours_ I say. You have bewitched me with your dream about America."

"We will make it come true," he impetuously cried. "I shall remind you on some future day of our first Christmas Eve, and then you will be

obliged to confess that I have more courage, and am a better prophet than you."

She made no reply, but cut the last string and opened the box. All sorts of small presents came to view, a pair of woollen gloves that his eldest sister had knitted for him, a watch-chain woven of the fair hair of the younger, with a pretty little gold key hanging to it, home-made gingerbread, and finally a large sealed bottle.

"Have you vineyards?" asked she playfully.

He laughed in spite of all his sadness. "It is elder wine, and the grapes grow in our little garden. As a child I thought it the best of all things, and ever since my good mother believes she cannot please me better than by sending me on every Christmas Eve, and every birthday, a sample at least of her last year's making."

"I hope it tastes better to you than the most costly Rhine wine," said she earnestly, "or you would not deserve it. Look--there are letters."

"Will you look them over? I am too much distracted. I should not know what they were about if I read them."

She had seated herself on the sofa, and taken the letters on her knee; one after the other she read them with most devout attention, as though their contents were wonderful and sublime, yet they were only made up of sisters' chat; little jests, apologies for the insignificance of their offerings; and in the lines written by the mother, there was traceable, together with her pride in having so good a son, her sorrow at being unable to embrace him at such a time, and her anxious fear that it was not so much work that kept him away, but rather the melancholy unsocial mood which even made his letters short.

"Are you still reading them?" he at length asked. "They are simple people, and when they write, the best that is in them does not always get put on paper. Good God! thou art weeping, Lottka!"

She laid the letters on the box, rose hurriedly, and pressed back the tears that still welled from between her long eye-lashes. "I will go now," she faintly said. "I shall be better out of doors."

"Go? now? and where? The storm would blow you down. Remain here for to-night, and if you like--the kitchen is close by--two chairs will do for me--and besides I have not a thought of sleeping."

She shook her head, and looked down. Then she suddenly raised her eyes, and looked full at his with an expression that made his heart beat wildly.

"Not so," she said. "But it is true that the storm without would blow me down, and where too could I go? Is this not Christmas Eve, and the last that we shall ever spend together. And I must give thee something, my presents to the children gave me no real pleasure, and why should I not on this day at least think of myself as well? Am I not right, Sebastian?"

She had never before called him by his name.

"Thou wilt give me something?" enquired he, amazed and uncertain.

"The only thing I still possess--myself," she gasped, and wound her arms about his neck.

* * * * *

When he woke in the dark on the morrow, and half raised himself from bed, still uncertain whether it had been real or only the most wondrous of dreams, the chamber was empty, not a trace remained of the last night's visitor. He felt all round his little sitting-room, called her gently by name, thinking she had perhaps stolen into the kitchen just for a freak, and would soon return. But all was silent. The intense cold overcame him, and with teeth chattering he slipped back into bed, and there, propped by pillows, tried to collect his thoughts.

Before long a horrible fear sprung up within him. With burning brow, despite the icy air, he hastily drew on his clothes, and kindled a light. The Christmas gifts of his family were still on the table, and he suddenly discovered a sheet written over in pencil pushed between the letters from his mother and sisters. The characters were uncertain and tremulous, as though written in the dark. The words ran as follows:--"Farewell, my beloved friend, my only friend! It grieves me much that I must grieve you so, must leave you so! But there is no other way. You would never let me go there where I needs must go, unless both are to be made unhappy. I thank thee for thy true love. But all the sweetness in thy soul can never wash away the bitterness from mine. Sleep well--farewell! I kiss thee once more in sleep. I know not whether thou wilt be able to read this. Do not grieve; believe that all is well with me now. Thy own loving one even in death."

The maid who was in the habit of coming about this time to light the kitchen-fire, heard a hollow cry in the next room, and opened the door in her terror. She there saw the young student lying on the sofa as though prostrated by some heavy blow. When she called him by name, he only shook his head as if to say she need not concern herself about him, and then stooped to pick up the paper that had fallen out of his hand.

"What o'clock?" he enquired.

"It has just struck six."

"Give me my cloak and stick. I will--"

He tottered to the door.

"You are going out bare-headed in all this cold? All the shops are closed, there is not a creature in the streets: you know this is a holiday?"

"A holiday," he said, repeating the syllables one by one as though trying to make out their meaning. "Give me--"

"Your cap? Here it is. Will you not first of all have a cup of coffee? The water will soon boil."

He made no further reply, but went out with heavy steps, and stumbled down the dark staircase. The snow crunched under his feet, and thick icicles hung in his beard. Far and near there was not a living creature to be seen in the dim streets; the sentinels in the sentry-boxes looked like stiff snow men. As he passed the bridge he saw that the river had frozen over during the night. He followed its course a long way, his eyes riveted on the ice as though looking for something there. Then he plunged into the neighbouring streets, quite aimlessly, like one walking in his sleep. For he could not expect to find what he was searching for by any pondering or thinking of his own. But the fever of an immeasurable agony drove him restlessly on, until he was utterly exhausted.

He might have been wandering a couple of hours or more, for the streets were beginning to look alive, when he reached the Potsdam Gate. He there saw a cab stopping in front of the small toll-house, coming as it seemed from the park. The toll-keeper came out in his furs, and as he reached out his snuff-box to a policeman who sat by the driver, asked laughingly--

"Anything that pays duty?" pointing to the closed cab windows.

"Not anything that pays duty here," was the reply. "I must give up my contraband to the proper authorities. She has smuggled herself--not into, but out of the world, but she is a rare piece of goods all the same. I was making my first round this morning yonder there by Louise-island, when I saw a well-dressed lady sitting on a bench, her head drooping as though she were asleep. 'My pretty child,' said I, 'look out some warmer place than this to sleep in, in such bitter cold as this.' But there was no waking her. Her hand still held a small

bottle--it smelt like laurel leaves. She must have drunk it off, and then tout doucement have fallen to sleep! Good morning. I must make haste to deliver her up!"

The driver cracked his whip. At that very moment they again heard the toll-keeper's voice.

"Stop!" (he called out). "You can take another passenger. A gentleman looked into the cab window--and bang!--there he lies in the snow. Do get down, comrade, he is quite a young man; he must have weak nerves indeed to be knocked down in a second at the sight of a dead woman! How if you put him in beside her? They seem much of a muchness."

"No," returned the policeman, "that is contrary to regulations. Dead and living are not to be shut in together. Wait, we will carry him into the toll-house. If you rub his head with snow, and give him something strong to smell at, he'll come round in five minutes. I am up to these cases."

They bore the unconscious figure into the house: then the cab set out on its way again. But the policeman's prognostics were not fulfilled. Sebastian's consciousness did not return for five weeks instead of five minutes. It was only when the last snow had melted away that the miserable man began to creep about a little with the aid of his stick. Then he went off to his parents, who never knew what a strange fate had desolated his youth, and cast a shadow over his manhood, that was never entirely dispelled. When he died at the age of five-and-thirty he left behind him neither wife nor child.

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FALSE DAWN.

To-night God knows what thing shall tide,
The Earth is racked and faint--
Expectant, sleepless, open-eyed;
And we, who from the Earth were made,
Thrill with our Mother's pain.

In Durance.

No man will ever know the exact truth of this story; though women may sometimes whisper it to one another after a dance, when they are putting up their hair for the night and comparing lists of victims. A man, of course, cannot assist at these functions. So the tale must be told from the outside--in the dark--all wrong.

Never praise a sister to a sister, in the hope of your compliments reaching the proper ears, and so preparing the way for you later on. Sisters are women first, and sisters afterwards; and you will find that you do yourself harm.

Saumarez knew this when he made up his mind to propose to the elder Miss Copleigh. Saumarez was a strange man, with few merits, so far as men could see, though he was popular with women, and carried enough conceit to stock a Viceroy's Council and leave a little over for the Commander-in-Chief's Staff. He was a Civilian. Very many women took an interest in Saumarez, perhaps, because his manner to them was offensive. If you hit a pony over the nose at the outset of your acquaintance, he may not love you, but he will take a deep interest in your movements ever afterwards. The elder Miss Copleigh was nice, plump, winning and pretty. The younger was not so pretty, and, from men disregarding the hint set forth above, her style was repellant and unattractive. Both girls had, practically, the same figure, and there was a strong likeness between them in look and voice; though no one could doubt for an instant which was the nicer of the two.

Saumarez made up his mind, as soon as they came into the station from Behar, to marry the elder one. At least, we all made sure that he would, which comes to the same thing. She was two and twenty, and he was thirty-three, with pay and allowances of nearly fourteen hundred rupees a month. So the match, as we arranged it, was in every way a good one. Saumarez was his name, and summary was his nature, as a man once said. Having drafted his Resolution, he formed a Select Committee of One to sit upon it, and resolved to take his time. In our unpleasant slang, the Copleigh girls "hunted in couples." That is to say, you could do nothing

with one without the other. They were very loving sisters; but their mutual affection was sometimes inconvenient. Saumarez held the balance-true between them, and none but himself could have said to which side his heart inclined; though every one guessed. He rode with them a good deal and danced with them, but he never succeeded in detaching them from each other for any length of time.

Women said that the two girls kept together through deep mistrust, each fearing that the other would steal a march on her. But that has nothing to do with a man. Saumarez was silent for good or bad, and as business-likely attentive as he could be, having due regard to his work and his polo. Beyond doubt both girls were fond of him.

As the hot weather drew nearer, and Saumarez made no sign, women said that you could see their trouble in the eyes of the girls--that they were looking strained, anxious, and irritable. Men are quite blind in these matters unless they have more of the woman than the man in their composition, in which case it does not matter what they say or think. I maintain it was the hot April days that took the color out of the Copleigh girls' cheeks. They should have been sent to the Hills early. No one--man or woman--feels an angel when the hot weather is approaching. The younger sister grew more cynical--not to say acid--in her ways; and the winningness of the elder wore thin. There was more effort in it.

Now the Station wherein all these things happened was, though not a little one, off the line of rail, and suffered through want of attention. There were no gardens or bands or amusements worth speaking of, and it was nearly a day's journey to come into Lahore for a dance. People were grateful for small things to interest them.

About the beginning of May, and just before the final exodus of Hill-goers, when the weather was very hot and there were not more than twenty people in the Station, Saumarez gave a moonlight riding-picnic at an old tomb, six miles away, near the bed of the river. It was a "Noah's Ark" picnic; and there was to be the usual arrangement of quarter-mile intervals between each couple, on account of the dust. Six couples came altogether, including chaperons. Moonlight picnics are useful just at the very end of the season, before all the girls go away to the Hills. They lead to understandings, and should be encouraged by chaperones; especially those whose girls look sweetish in riding habits. I knew a case once. But that is another story. That picnic was called the "Great Pop Picnic," because every one knew Saumarez would propose then to the eldest Miss Copleigh; and, beside his affair, there was another which might possibly come to happiness. The social atmosphere was heavily charged and wanted clearing.

We met at the parade-ground at ten: the night was fearfully hot. The horses sweated even at walking-pace, but anything was better than

sitting still in our own dark houses. When we moved off under the full moon we were four couples, one triplet, and Mr. Saumarez rode with the Copleigh girls, and I loitered at the tail of the procession, wondering with whom Saumarez would ride home. Every one was happy and contented; but we all felt that things were going to happen. We rode slowly: and it was nearly midnight before we reached the old tomb, facing the ruined tank, in the decayed gardens where we were going to eat and drink. I was late in coming up; and before I went into the garden, I saw that the horizon to the north carried a faint, dun-colored feather. But no one would have thanked me for spoiling so well-managed an entertainment as this picnic--and a dust-storm, more or less, does no great harm.

We gathered by the tank. Some one had brought out a banjo--which is a most sentimental instrument--and three or four of us sang. You must not laugh at this. Our amusements in out-of-the-way Stations are very few indeed. Then we talked in groups or together, lying under the trees, with the sun-baked roses dropping their petals on our feet, until supper was ready. It was a beautiful supper, as cold and as iced as you could wish; and we stayed long over it.

I had felt that the air was growing hotter and hotter; but nobody seemed to notice it until the moon went out and a burning hot wind began lashing the orange-trees with a sound like the noise of the sea. Before we knew where we were, the dust-storm was on us, and everything was roaring, whirling darkness. The supper-table was blown bodily into the tank. We were afraid of staying anywhere near the old tomb for fear it might be blown down. So we felt our way to the orange-trees where the horses were picketed and waited for the storm to blow over. Then the little light that was left vanished, and you could not see your hand before your face. The air was heavy with dust and sand from the bed of the river, that filled boots and pockets and drifted down necks and coated eyebrows and moustaches. It was one of the worst dust-storms of the year. We were all huddled together close to the trembling horses, with the thunder clattering overhead, and the lightning spurting like water from a sluice, all ways at once. There was no danger, of course, unless the horses broke loose. I was standing with my head downward and my hands over my mouth, hearing the trees thrashing each other. I could not see who was next me till the flashes came. Then I found that I was packed near Saumarez and the eldest Miss Copleigh, with my own horse just in front of me. I recognized the eldest Miss Copleigh, because she had a pagri round her helmet, and the younger had not. All the electricity in the air had gone into my body and I was quivering and tingling from head to foot--exactly as a corn shoots and tingles before rain. It was a grand storm. The wind seemed to be picking up the earth and pitching it to leeward in great heaps; and the heat beat up from the ground like the heat of the Day of Judgment.

The storm lulled slightly after the first half-hour, and I heard a despairing little voice close to my ear, saying to itself, quietly and

softly, as if some lost soul were flying about with the wind: "O my God!" Then the younger Miss Copleigh stumbled into my arms, saying: "Where is my horse? Get my horse. I want to go home. I WANT to go home. Take me home."

I thought that the lightning and the black darkness had frightened her; so I said there was no danger, but she must wait till the storm blew over. She answered: "It is not THAT! It is not THAT! I want to go home! O take me away from here!"

I said that she could not go till the light came; but I felt her brush past me and go away. It was too dark to see where. Then the whole sky was split open with one tremendous flash, as if the end of the world were coming, and all the women shrieked.

Almost directly after this, I felt a man's hand on my shoulder and heard Saumarez bellowing in my ear. Through the rattling of the trees and howling of the wind, I did not catch his words at once, but at last I heard him say: "I've proposed to the wrong one! What shall I do?" Saumarez had no occasion to make this confidence to me. I was never a friend of his, nor am I now; but I fancy neither of us were ourselves just then. He was shaking as he stood with excitement, and I was feeling queer all over with the electricity. I could not think of anything to say except:--"More fool you for proposing in a dust-storm." But I did not see how that would improve the mistake.

Then he shouted: "Where's Edith--Edith Copleigh?" Edith was the youngest sister. I answered out of my astonishment:--"What do you want with HER?" Would you believe it, for the next two minutes, he and I were shouting at each other like maniacs--he vowing that it was the youngest sister he had meant to propose to all along, and I telling him till my throat was hoarse that he must have made a mistake! I can't account for this except, again, by the fact that we were neither of us ourselves. Everything seemed to me like a bad dream--from the stamping of the horses in the darkness to Saumarez telling me the story of his loving Edith Copleigh since the first. He was still clawing my shoulder and begging me to tell him where Edith Copleigh was, when another lull came and brought light with it, and we saw the dust-cloud forming on the plain in front of us. So we knew the worst was over. The moon was low down, and there was just the glimmer of the false dawn that comes about an hour before the real one. But the light was very faint, and the dun cloud roared like a bull. I wondered where Edith Copleigh had gone; and as I was wondering I saw three things together: First Maud Copleigh's face come smiling out of the darkness and move towards Saumarez, who was standing by me. I heard the girl whisper, "George," and slide her arm through the arm that was not clawing my shoulder, and I saw that look on her face which only comes once or twice in a lifetime--when a woman is perfectly happy and the air is full of trumpets and gorgeous-colored fire and the Earth turns into cloud because she loves and is loved. At

the same time, I saw Saumarez's face as he heard Maud Copleigh's voice, and fifty yards away from the clump of orange-trees I saw a brown holland habit getting upon a horse.

It must have been my state of over-excitement that made me so quick to meddle with what did not concern me. Saumarez was moving off to the habit; but I pushed him back and said:--"Stop here and explain. I'll fetch her back!" and I ran out to get at my own horse. I had a perfectly unnecessary notion that everything must be done decently and in order, and that Saumarez's first care was to wipe the happy look out of Maud Copleigh's face. All the time I was linking up the curb-chain I wondered how he would do it.

I cantered after Edith Copleigh, thinking to bring her back slowly on some pretence or another. But she galloped away as soon as she saw me, and I was forced to ride after her in earnest. She called back over her shoulder--"Go away! I'm going home. Oh, go away!" two or three times; but my business was to catch her first, and argue later. The ride just fitted in with the rest of the evil dream. The ground was very bad, and now and again we rushed through the whirling, choking "dust-devils" in the skirts of the flying storm. There was a burning hot wind blowing that brought up a stench of stale brick-kilns with it; and through the half light and through the dust-devils, across that desolate plain, flickered the brown holland habit on the gray horse. She headed for the Station at first. Then she wheeled round and set off for the river through beds of burnt down jungle-grass, bad even to ride a pig over. In cold blood I should never have dreamed of going over such a country at night, but it seemed quite right and natural with the lightning crackling overhead, and a reek like the smell of the Pit in my nostrils. I rode and shouted, and she bent forward and lashed her horse, and the aftermath of the dust-storm came up and caught us both, and drove us downwind like pieces of paper.

I don't know how far we rode; but the drumming of the horse-hoofs and the roar of the wind and the race of the faint blood-red moon through the yellow mist seemed to have gone on for years and years, and I was literally drenched with sweat from my helmet to my gaiters when the gray stumbled, recovered himself, and pulled up dead lame. My brute was used up altogether. Edith Copleigh was in a sad state, plastered with dust, her helmet off, and crying bitterly. "Why can't you let me alone?" she said. "I only wanted to get away and go home. Oh, PLEASE let me go!"

"You have got to come back with me, Miss Copleigh. Saumarez has something to say to you."

It was a foolish way of putting it; but I hardly knew Miss Copleigh; and, though I was playing Providence at the cost of my horse, I could not tell her in as many words what Saumarez had told me. I thought he could do that better himself. All her pretence about being tired and

wanting to go home broke down, and she rocked herself to and fro in the saddle as she sobbed, and the hot wind blew her black hair to leeward. I am not going to repeat what she said, because she was utterly unstrung.

This, if you please, was the cynical Miss Copleigh. Here was I, almost an utter stranger to her, trying to tell her that Saumarez loved her and she was to come back to hear him say so! I believe I made myself understood, for she gathered the gray together and made him hobble somehow, and we set off for the tomb, while the storm went thundering down to Umballa and a few big drops of warm rain fell. I found out that she had been standing close to Saumarez when he proposed to her sister and had wanted to go home and cry in peace, as an English girl should. She dabbled her eyes with her pocket-handkerchief as we went along, and babbled to me out of sheer lightness of heart and hysteria. That was perfectly unnatural; and yet, it seemed all right at the time and in the place. All the world was only the two Copleigh girls, Saumarez and I, ringed in with the lightning and the dark; and the guidance of this misguided world seemed to lie in my hands.

When we returned to the tomb in the deep, dead stillness that followed the storm, the dawn was just breaking and nobody had gone away. They were waiting for our return. Saumarez most of all. His face was white and drawn. As Miss Copleigh and I limped up, he came forward to meet us, and, when he helped her down from her saddle, he kissed her before all the picnic. It was like a scene in a theatre, and the likeness was heightened by all the dust-white, ghostly-looking men and women under the orange-trees, clapping their hands, as if they were watching a play--at Saumarez's choice. I never knew anything so un-English in my life.

Lastly, Saumarez said we must all go home or the Station would come out to look for us, and WOULD I be good enough to ride home with Maud Copleigh? Nothing would give me greater pleasure, I said.

So, we formed up, six couples in all, and went back two by two; Saumarez walking at the side of Edith Copleigh, who was riding his horse.

The air was cleared; and little by little, as the sun rose, I felt we were all dropping back again into ordinary men and women and that the "Great Pop Picnic" was a thing altogether apart and out of the world--never to happen again. It had gone with the dust-storm and the tingle in the hot air.

I felt tired and limp, and a good deal ashamed of myself as I went in for a bath and some sleep.

There is a woman's version of this story, but it will never be written.... unless Maud Copleigh cares to try.

From: The Project Gutenberg EBook of Plain Tales from the Hills, by Rudyard Kipling

YOUNG STRONG OF "THE CLARION."

BY MILICENT WASHBURN SHINN.

Overland Monthly, September, 1884.

If you had asked any resident of Green's Ferry some eight years ago--say, in '76--who were the leading men of his town, he would doubtless have begun:

"Well, there's Judge Garvey, of course. Then there's Uncle Billy Green, who built the first shanty there in '49, and young Strong of 'The Clarion'--"

However he might continue his enumeration, it would certainly have been as above for the first three names. One you would have recognized, if you had been following State politics closely for some years; for Judge Garvey was very regularly chosen State senator in his district, and had held the barren honor of presidential elector the last time his party carried the State. In '76, some of the papers were urging his nomination for Congress, and politicians thought his chance of such a nomination increasing. It has not turned out so; his name has quite dropped out of the papers, and it is said he does not certainly control his own county now; but at that time he was the most potent political influence in three counties. What he influenced them to, I never clearly understood, for I cannot recall that I ever heard his name mentioned in connection with any measure or opinion.

A file of "The Clarion" during the four years that young Strong was editor would doubtless throw light on the matter. "The Clarion" was at this time a sort of voice crying in the wilderness about Reform, which was a very new idea, indeed, to its readers. Garvey did not like the paper, and young Strong disliked Garvey very much; but the two men had kept on fairly good terms--not so rigid good terms, of course, as to forbid their expressing to third parties the frankest contempt for each other. The Judge had here the advantage, for Strong despised him indignantly, as a knave, while he despised Strong--or said he did--pityingly, as a fool. He must, however, have at bottom honored the young fellow with some serious antipathy; for it was after all no laughing matter that a boy of twenty-five should come into "his Gaul, which he had conquered by arms," and filch away his home paper from under his very eyes. Moreover, though people read the editorials, laughed, and voted with the Judge just the same--they still did read them. However, Judge Garvey certainly was more civil to Strong than Strong was to him.

As for Uncle Billy Green, his rank was due not only to his connection with the "first shanty" (a house of entertainment at the point where a trail turned from the river toward the mines), but to his having remained steadily on the spot ever since, putting up a larger building at intervals as the settlement gathered around him, until now he was proprietor of the American Eagle Hotel, a house of goodly dimensions and generous equipment--billiard-room, bowling alley, shooting-gallery. Nor did Uncle Billy Green own and conduct this house in a purely business spirit; a more modest one would have been more profitable; he liked to "do that much for the town." A man by the name of Gulliver had established the old rope-ferry, before the day of bridges, but it was naturally called Green's Ferry, being a ferry at Green's place. He had been of an undoubted valor in the Indian fights of early days, was full of reminiscences, had no personal objections to anybody or anything, and had long given over to Judge Garvey the trouble of forming his opinions.

Judge Garvey and young Strong were pretty sure to be put upon such boards or committees as the local affairs of the small town demanded; and in local matters they proved to pull together fairly well, however at odds they were politically. But in the end it was not over politics, but over the district school, that they fell out squarely. They were both trustees, and as Green was the third, the board seemed in little danger from any too radical reforming tendencies young Strong might be guilty of, and the Judge had no thought of danger as he walked down to "The Clarion" office, a breathless September afternoon, a couple of days before the school should open.

He found young Strong in his editorial room. This was a corner of the printing-office, fenced off by a great screen pasted over with old exchanges. Behind this, Strong sat at his table, correcting proof energetically. It was evident that he took the editing of this little four-page weekly rather seriously--but, then, a man must needs be business-like to produce even four pages weekly with one assistant, and Strong had to economize time enough from strictly editorial functions to do a goodly share of type-setting and the rest of the mechanics of the office.

"I beg your pardon for interrupting you, Mr. Strong," said the Judge. "I perceive you are arduously occupied. But it becomes necessary to confer with you with regard to the school-teacher."

The Judge was a tall and vigorously built man--a little red-faced, but good-looking, if one did not insist on too fine a definiteness of outline. He spoke habitually with a certain inflation of manner, and tried to form himself upon a Southern type that was pretty abundant in our politics some years earlier. He was, however, a native of rural New York, early transplanted to California.

Strong turned in his chair, and sitting sidewise, rested his elbow on the proof-sheets, holding the pencil still in his fingers.

"Well?" he said. "I thought everything was settled."

"Assuredly." Judge Garvey rested his folded arms upon the pile of books stacked at the rear of the table, and leaned over them in a friendly way. "Mr. Coakley is to arrive Sunday evening, and will begin the term on Monday morning, to the great satisfaction, I can guarantee, of all concerned. A slight and merely temporary embarrassment has arisen, with respect to which a few words will make it all right. In point of fact, the young woman with whom we previously held correspondence--who, you will remember, broke her engagement with us to take a more advantageous position--is here."

The Judge stopped for question or comment, but as Strong waited for explanation, he went on:

"She has, it appears, failed after all to secure that, and come here expecting to fall back upon our school, not having heard that it was engaged."

"Well, that's unfortunate for her," said Strong, "but you can't ship Coakley now."

"Your views coincide exactly with my own, my dear sir." The Judge straightened up with some relief. "I have only to ask, then, for a note to the lady to that effect, that my own explanation already given may be corroborated."

Strong began to look alert and suspicious at this.

"Views coincide?" he said. "What two views could there be? What does she say brought her here?"

"She's got an idea that she's got first claim on the place," said the Judge, plumping suddenly into colloquial diction. He had a trick of doing so when he got down to business. It would have had something the effect of candid confession, produced by a maiden's plain-hair days alternated with her waved-hair days, had not the grandiloquence of tone and manner become so far second nature that it ran through both his dialects, and lessened the contrast. "You can't always make a woman see sense."

Strong looked suspiciously at him a few seconds. "Well, I'll go see her this evening," he said. "Where's she staying?"

"That is a totally superfluous tax on your time, my dear Strong," said the Judge, leaning persuasively across the books again. "I have here

a mere formal line, stating that Coakley is the regularly engaged teacher of the school, and will begin next Monday; your signature to it--Green's and mine are already there--will be all that is necessary." He pushed pen and ink toward Strong with his exaggerated air of courtesy.

"Oh, I'm not going to sign things that way, you know. I'll go see her." He turned and drew his proof-sheets to him with an air of dismissal.

The Judge stood up very straight, expanded his chest, and folded his arms according to his conception of the Virginian manner. "Am I to understand, sir, that you question my veracity?"

"I don't question anything," said the young man, impatiently. "I'll know what I'm talking about when I've seen her."

"Permit me to suggest, sir"--the Judge was approaching his platform manner--"permit me to suggest, sir, that Mr. Green and myself constitute a majority of the board, and Mr. Green, sir--Uncle Billy Green--has confidence in my honor, and will sustain my action, whatever line you may be persuaded to adopt."

"Oh, as to that," said Strong, exaggerating his crispness of manner in protest against the Judge's staginess, "I'm clerk of the board, and you can't hold a legal meeting nor pay a salary without me. What's the reason you don't want me to see her?"

Judge Garvey unfolded his arms, fell back a step, and dropped easily into the sonorous declamation that made the stalwart Judge no inconspicuous figure on the floor of the Legislature. The newspapers, of course, were responsible for his language--as for the rest of his education; but such as it was, he used it fluently, and the declamatory manner was, to his constituency, quite an essential of eloquence--the prime difference, in fact, between oratory and plain talking.

"You cast aspersions upon my honor, sir. Through me you insult the people of Green's Ferry--of this county--of this district--the enlightened and honorable constituency who it is my proud honor to represent. I sco-r-n to answer your insinuations, sir. They will be hurled back upon yourself by the united voice and righteous indignation of my justly aroused fellow-townsmen, by the voters of this noble district--I may say, by the whole State of California--to which I am not unknown, sir."

Half-a-dozen of the justly aroused fellow-townsmen were straggling in from the street, for in Green's Ferry a sprinkling of the citizens spend the warm afternoons sitting in absolute tranquillity on boxes

and barrels here and there, under the awnings of the several business blocks; and the knowledge that a row was at last on between Judge Garvey and young Strong reached them at the first peal. The Judge, alive to the increase of his audience, raised his voice a shade, and went on with a curious mixture of complacency and genuine wrath.

"Is it lack of confidence that has sent me to represent my honorable constituency in the legislative halls of California, Mr. Strong? Have I received that proud token of esteem only to be insulted by one whose obscurity is his only shield; who, with unknown record, with no recommendation save his own overwhelming self-esteem, comes among us to sow dissent in peaceful counsels, and draw scorn and contempt upon his own head by impotent and futile attacks upon those whom he is powerless to harm?"

This rounded the climax well, so the Judge only added: "The call you propose, sir, I shall regard as a direct insult to myself," and strode dramatically from the room.

The papered screen went crashing to the floor behind him. The justly aroused fellow-townsmen looked after him, laughing but admiring.

"Laid you out, didn't he, Strong?"

"That's the way he does it at Sacramento. Oh, the Judge is a real orator--there's no doubt of that."

"_He_ don't have to make his speech up before-hand. No, sir, right where he is, any time of day, he just turns the faucet, and there it comes."

"What was the row, anyway, Strong?"

"I don't know myself; something about a teacher--he began to bluster all of a sudden." Strong walked over to the screen, picked it up, set it straight along a crack with intense precision, and went back to his seat. "Drunk, isn't he? I haven't heard him take the stump that way since election. He's always made rather a point of not quarrelling with me, too."

"Oh, he's no drunker'n usual," answered with candor a fellow-townsmen. "The Judge ain't really himself until he's a little off. He didn't blow so without some reason; don't you fool yourself--not if _I_ know the man."

"Well, if he's got any game he must have come to his last chance in it, to try bullying on _me_," said Strong; and then another of the group asked:

"What row could there be about a teacher, Strong? Thought you'd given him his man."

The pencil rolled from the edge of the table across the floor at Strong's movement of attention. "Coakley?--what of him?"

The man began to laugh, and one or two others joined in. One of them said a little offensively: "Pretty good on you, youngster! You took too big a contract for your age when you undertook to keep up with Judge Garvey. He'll give you odds and take you in, every time."

Strong reddened a little, but waited to be answered with very fair composure.

"Didn't you really know, Strong? The Judge scored one on you that time, then. Why, he's been Garvey's man in Sierra Township one or two elections now. Used to be a Millerite preacher, before your day, but he broke down at that. Good hand in county politics, but he's always completely out of business between times. Why you remember him, Strong--he was round with the Judge election times--cross-eyed fellow, with black siders."

"_That_ fellow? Why, he can't spell straight! The way of it was, Judge Garvey told us only Tuesday that the teacher we'd got--first-rate certificates--had backed out; and we couldn't put off beginning school any longer, nor hear of any teacher to be had; so when he produced this man, we had really no choice. I suppose I needn't ask where he got his certificates."

"No--Garvey's solid with this county board and superintendent."

"Disgraceful!" said Strong; whereat all laughed, except one who had lost a ranch a few years before during business dealings with the Judge.

"Oh, he's a scamp--I wouldn't trust him out of sight with his baby's silver mug," said this man, with feeling. The rest laughed again. In Green's Ferry a certain easy-going good-heartedness is required by the public conscience, rather than decalogue virtues. Garvey liked sharp practice--all right; if you were yourself hurt, you would naturally begin to vote against him; otherwise, it was none of your business, except as successful rascality had a claim on your admiration. Young Strong liked to write furious reform editorials--all right; if you were the one hit, you would swear at Strong and stop your subscription until a hit on some one else made you renew it; otherwise, it was none of your business and lively reading. They leaned against the wall and desk, and began with perfect good-nature to tell stories of the Judge. "R'member the time he got that Mexican ranch? Fellow thought it was a bill of sale for thirty acres he was signing, and it was three

hundred."

"Best thing was when he made old man Meeker believe he was dying, and deed over a good fifty thousand dollars in stock to his daughter--and married the girl, sir, before the old fellow found he was good for twenty years more. He made the air smell of brimstone the rest of his life if you mentioned Garvey to him! Drowned in a ford a winter or two later, after all. Used to live in a little shanty up Indian Crick and raise potatoes--and Garvey sent him a cow--cheekiest thing!"

Strong turned sharply away from the laugh that followed, and went on with his work, while they slowly dispersed. He worked on savagely with brows drawn together. "It isn't so much the existence of scoundrels like Garvey that gets me," he was saying to himself, "as the way the whole crowd of them take him." He stopped to read over the words he was correcting--they were editorial:

"Was ever folly greater than this of our community, in dropping everything else to run after money. For what do you expect to do with it when you get it? Better eating, and drinking, and the privilege of being toadied to by those who want to make something out of you--what more can you get out of money, if you have never made anything of yourself? Just as a pig, if he might take his choice whether he would be turned into a man or would be moved into a cosier sty, with more unbounded swill, would doubtless choose the sty!"

"My broom against the ocean," he said; but he went on correcting doggedly.

And, not to conceal from you what was in reality the most significant fact about Will Strong--the key to about everything he thought and did--he was mentally submitting this editorial, as he had submitted every other he had written, to the test of the probable opinion of a young woman he had not seen nor heard from for two years, but who nevertheless constituted to his mind the chief motive for existence--if not the chief and sufficient explanation of the human race's having been created at all. You must realize, before trying to understand his story, that Will Strong was really a very romantic young man indeed, though he pretended to Green's Ferry that he was not.

Outside the screen, the strips of sun through the western window and open door lengthened across the meagre collection of dusty fonts of type, the small press, the piles of papers. The black-fingered, red-haired boy setting type among them reflected that it must be nearly dinner-time, and turned to see how far in the hot strips had crept--turned, and stood staring; for he met squarely the inquiring look of a pair of clear eyes, and became aware of a lady in the door-way.

It is probable that Jim had never dreamed in his life of any other social distinction than that between rich and poor, notorious and obscure, nor was he a lad of perceptions; yet he knew at once that this was a very unusual sort of lady for Green's Ferry. If he had been a man of the social world he would have known that she was a gentlewoman of notably high-bred appearance. She glanced, not without dismay, about the shabby work-room, as if she felt herself where she had no business to be. Nevertheless, she came forward frankly, and asked in the friendly way of one whose station needs no asserting:

"Mr. Strong?--one of the school-board?--Is he here?"

"Yes'm." The boy made no motion, but stood blankly staring.

"May I see him, please?"

"Lady to see you, Mr. Strong," shouted Jim, standing still.

In the few seconds before Strong emerged, the lady stood her ground in the middle of the floor, with some appearance of anxiety. She was certainly a very noticeable person, and came nearer to warranting that strong word "beautiful" than falls often to the lot of woman. It was a matter of outline more than color, however, for she had not much of that about her--brown hair, blue-gray eyes, skin of a warm paleness. All this low coloring, however, was so perfect of its sort, that it gave something the effect of a fine etching--a rich distinctness attained by shades, not colors. Instead of being outshone by more brilliant-hued women, Miss Northrop had always had the effect of making them look chromo-like. So, too, a certain nobility and self-forgetfulness of manner made the more elaborate manners of others seem the crude device of inferiority. It was a good deal due to her eyes; she had most wonderful eyes, and I doubt if any man or many women ever met them in a full look without feeling a little stir of pulse--whether it was in the lashes, or in the sweet straightforwardness of look, utterly devoid of coquetry, or in the depth of the gray, or in what; certain it is that no one ever saw Miss Northrop without talking of her beautiful eyes.

"A lady to see him?" The word in Green's Ferry defined only the sex. Some one with a notice of a flock of sheep for sale, which she wanted to get in as a local; or with an ill-spelled poem; or--by George, yes--that school-mistress. Lucky she had not met Garvey there--poor girl! Strong laid his pencil down, and came out from behind the screen good-naturedly enough--and stopped short. What a thing to happen to a man, that he should live and move and have his being for a dozen years in the thought of one woman, should count a world worth living in because she was somewhere on it, and a pitiful human race worth working for because they were her fellow-creatures--and should come

out from behind his screen, and see her before his eyes--on his dingy work-room floor--out of her four thousand miles' distance!

They had been four years schoolmates in a New England High School. Will was a farmer's lad, from an outlying, rocky village, who worked for his board while he went to school. He came of an unschooled, hard-working, God-fearing yeoman race. Winifred could look up every line of her descent, through vista of governors, college-presidents, and ministers, back to Colonial aristocracy and gentry beyond sea. Her great-grandfathers had carried swords in Revolutionary battles, where Will's had followed with muskets. Winifred herself was one of those flowers into which excellent family trees break occasionally--flowers so lovely that no excellence of the tree seems enough to account for them. If she had any core of aristocratic coldness, it was so overlaid by a sweet humaneness, a frank generosity of impulse, that no one would have known it. If she had been a man, to have a valet, she would have been a hero to him.

Even in the democracy of school, Will Strong knew well enough the difference between his shy awkwardness and her pleasant frankness; and knew that though he could meet school requirements about as well as she, yet his mental range was crude and narrow beside hers; and any one could see that in the town where he was an unknown boy she was an important young lady. These things would not have counted for much had not some mediæval follower of some exiled king dropped down into the boy's temperament that passion of self-abasing loyalty that is rather an anachronism in our democratic days. They had been on terms of friendliness rather than friendship in school, but that was due more to his shyness than anything else. She had really given to him more opportunities than to most of her schoolmates; she liked his integrity and earnestness.

He had looked to college as the natural door between his world and hers; after four years at New Haven he might seek her acquaintance without audacity. To that end he had laboriously accumulated money, and had even passed his matriculation, when his father's death made him indispensable on the poor little farm. Since then he had doggedly plodded alone through the college curriculum, but without finding in it the mysterious pass-word that he had expected into the intellectual aristocracy. Some two years before, his mother's death and the growing up of younger brothers had left him free to seek his fortune in California. At twenty-seven he had lost his fresh look and boyish shyness; he looked older than he was, but he was really very youthful, and believed in all sorts of abstractions beginning with capitals. His mental furniture, being obtained from books, not people, was not quite in the style of the present decade, and he read Carlyle and Emerson more than Herbert Spencer. His creed had, therefore, quite transcendentalism enough to accommodate without incongruity his little private deification.

Once in every year or two, as opportunity took him near her home, he had called on her, and had multiplied each call mightily by thinking of it before and after. He had also kept up a stupid correspondence with a schoolmate who had lived in the same town with her, for the chance of her name being mentioned. Within a couple of years, however, she had lost her father and gone to relatives in New York, so he had lost exact knowledge even of her whereabouts.

She spoke before he had found his voice--without an instant's hesitation, indeed. "Oh, Will Strong!" she cried, stepping quickly toward him and holding out her hand. "I _hoped_ it was you!"

He took the offered hand, and said to himself that his own was consecrated by the touch to clean deeds forever. He would not have known how to address her, but he followed her leading.

"It is Winifred Northrop!" he said. "What is it? Can I do something for you?"

"You are school-committee man, are you not?" Anxiety, relief, and trust mingled in her voice.

"Trustee--yes. Why," he cried, "it isn't possible that _you_ are the lady!"

She laughed. "I suppose the lady must be I."

He did not smile. He even lost color with wrath. "Garvey has dared to play you some trick!--I did not dream--" he went on, eagerly, "Garvey kept the letters in his hands, and bungled over the name, so I did not once fairly catch it."

He turned back to his corner, and put the remaining bit of proof into his pocket. New heavens and new earth had come into existence since the last pencil mark on it.

"Jim," he said, "I'm called off on school-business. You get as much of that set up as you can before dinner, and then lock up; and I'll come down and make the corrections in the editorials before I go to bed. Now--Winifred--if I may walk home with you, we'll get to the bottom of Garvey's tricks. Villain!"

The epithet was so fervent, and so entirely without humorous intent, that Miss Northrop laughed again as they walked out into the dull, hot September afternoon sun. The board sidewalk was uneven and full of projecting nails and splinters, and she held her thin, blue-gray dress prettily aside from them; Will noted the gesture with admiration as intense as unreasonable. It seemed to him peculiarly admirable that

she should draw her hat a little forward to shade her eyes, and should take just the length of step that she did; the absolutely right step for a lady was thenceforth settled; since then, he has insisted unreasonably upon a certain shade as the only right thing in gray, as if he held in his own mind some positive standard beyond the realm of variable taste.

The two or three business blocks--rows of slight frame-buildings, more of them saloons than would seem possible--were very quiet; Green's Ferry is the shipping point of a wide stock-raising district, and all its activity centres about the railroad station at stated times daily. The justly aroused fellow-townsmen were all back under the awnings--leaning against the wall by the post-office, sitting on boxes by the grocery; some indolently telling stories and chaffing; some looking sleepily before them in absolute repose; some in various stages of inert drunkenness. All stared curiously at young Strong and the strange lady, and prepared to talk them over afterward, but no one addressed him.

They turned aside soon into a broad cross street with no sidewalk, where the coarse dust was in places ankle deep. Behind them, beyond the main street, a few groups of yellowing cottonwoods on bare banks of reddish clay marked the course of the Sacramento; before them the street faded into a limitless expanse of gravel, thinly dotted in the distance with dull green oaks, and bounded by long knolls, like wrinkles in the plain, dark with oaks against the smoky sky of September--a sky dull blue above, dull gray near the horizon.

Along either side of the street the flimsy wooden houses were set back, each in its yard, and surrounded by oleanders; sometimes there would be a few parched roses, a trellis of Madeira-vine, a patch of carefully nursed grass, often a row of China trees, whose fallen black seeds stippled the dust--but always the great rosy clumps of oleanders, glorying in the heat and drought. Every evening after dinner the owners come out, and stand watering these gardens with hose and sprinkler, till all along the street there is a murmur like rain and a smell of damp earth, and here and there through the warm twilight a glimpse of the white sprays of water; while the families sit on the porches and doorstep, and gossip and laugh. At this hour, however, the little gardens and splendid oleanders lay hot and deserted in the dusty afternoon.

"I haven't till now had time to spare from being anxious to be interested," Miss Northrop said. "I was rather panic-stricken this morning, and things were awful, instead of interesting, in proportion to their newness."

This bit of pathos stiffened Will's manner with the awkwardness of over-feeling, as he asked: "Now, what can I do for you--Winifred?"

The awkwardness made him more like the school-boy Will; and then, a familiar face four thousand miles from home seems more familiar than it really is. Miss Northrop answered confidingly: "I will tell you all about it, and then you will know what to do. I wrote to Judge Garvey--some one referred me to him at Sacramento--and asked if I might teach the school. He wrote back that I might, fixed the day, and directed me to a boarding-place that he had engaged for me. So I came by yesterday evening's train, and sent word that I was here. This morning he called and told me--with most oppressive civility--that as I had not answered his last letter, the place had been given to some one else. He said 'professional etiquette' here demands an answer in such a case, and failure to answer is equivalent to a withdrawal of the application."

"He lied," said Will, parenthetically, walking along with his eyes on the ground; she, on the contrary, looked at him often, with frank directness.

"He did not impress me," she said, "as the soul of candor. I said as little as possible to him, but when he was gone I asked about the rest of the committee, and as soon as I heard your name I hoped it was you; I knew you were somewhere in California. This afternoon I received his letter written to prevent my coming. It had followed me up here by the same train that I came on." She held the letter in her hand, and Will quietly took it and kept it. "I would not raise any controversy about such a thing," she went on, "if I had any idea in the world where else to go or what to do." Her voice sharpened a little again, with a note of pathos.

Will did not know how to answer without seeming to question or comment, so there came a pause; then he said:

"This Coakley was an electioneering agent of Garvey's, and doesn't know enough to teach babies. He seems to have turned up suddenly wanting help, and the Judge is willing enough to keep him on hand and under obligations until next election."

Miss Northrop stopped short and looked at him with brows a little raised, and her bearing became palpably more distant.

"But I cannot enter into contest with--these men for permission to teach school here," she said.

She was right, in her quick feeling that Will Strong's training could not have made work and discomfort and contact with vulgarity seem outside the sphere of women. If it had been one of his own sisters he would have said: "Oh, well, we have to take the world as we find it. Brace up, little girl; I'll put you safe through, and you'll find it's

not so bad, after all."

But what he said to Winifred Northrop was: "It is outrageous! Such brutes as Garvey have no business to look at a lady! If you really prefer not to take the school," he went on, with some embarrassment, "I hope you will call on me to help you in any other way; but if you want the school you shall have it, and no annoyance with it that I can help."

Miss Northrop repented that she had repented her confidence. "I remembered that you were kind of old, Will"--and her manner was irresistibly winning when she said such a thing--"but you are so very kind now that you make me ashamed. I only meant to ask you what I must do. Yes, I must take this position if I can, for I have no alternative."

"There is nothing for you to do," he said. "It is my place, as an officer of the school, to see that its rightful teacher is not defrauded."

"So it is," she said, relieved. "But I am none the less grateful."

"It is a pleasure to me to be able to do anything for you," he said, gravely, somewhat stiffly--from his tone you would not have suspected much more truth than usual in the formula.

She only said: "You are very kind," and then he lifted his hat, and left her at Mrs. Stutt's gate.

He deliberately and literally believed, as he walked down the street--directly to Green's--that he was the happiest man in the world. For that matter, it is not impossible that he was. He was absolutely innocent of conscious hyperbole in saying, "It would be worth a life-time of trouble only to have seen her; and I know her and am able to do her a service!"

He scored one advantage in having seen Miss Northrop early; he saw Green before Garvey had talked with him. The report of the quarrel had by no means failed to reach "The American Eagle," and when Strong came in Uncle Billy Green was just expressing himself with regard to Coakley:

"Of course the Judge'll provide for his man when he gets a chance. That's where he's sharp. And if Coakley is smart enough to suit Judge Garvey, he's smart enough to teach my children--that's what I say."

A private audience with him would have been merely postponing the hour of general discussion, so Strong made a brief exposition of his

case--gently enough, but with considerable force--then and there, displaying the letter he carried by way of proof. He hardly expected to elicit anything but the usual laugh and comment on the Judge's smartness. But there was a marked seriousness of tone in the remarks when he ended.

"Well, that _is_ pretty rough."

"Yes, sir, that's going too far. The Judge ought to know where to stop. I don't stand by no man when it comes to a shabby trick on an unprotected school-marm."

"A real lady, too--I could see that when she went by with you, Strong."

Even Green said, uneasily, "No, I shouldn't think the Judge ought to do that, quite."

It was evident that Green's Ferry drew its lines as much as any other town. The moral support it offered Strong was mainly negative, however, and Green, after several alternate conversations with his two fellow trustees during this Saturday evening, went off early Sunday morning to visit his married daughter at the old Meeker place, leaving word that they must fix it between them. Judge Garvey closed the somewhat stormy conference of Saturday evening with a promise to break down Miss Northrop's school in a week, and Strong's paper in a month. "Do you flatter yourself I should not have had your contemptible sheet in powder under my feet, sir, before this, if I had thought it worth the attention?" Nevertheless, as there was nothing on which the Judge prided himself more than on his invariable civility to ladies ("the courtly Judge" was his favorite phrase in writing up a local notice of any affair at which he had been present), Strong, having possession of the school-house key, was able to put Miss Northrop into possession on Monday morning without opposition. The Judge even visited her during the day and addressed the school with extreme suavity.

He was, however, very seriously affronted, and had not passed his Sunday without diligent preparation among parents and children to make Miss Northrop's position untenable. It would have been no difficult task, either, but for an altogether unprecedented obstacle--a factor that he had not dreamed of in his calculations, and that Strong himself had underestimated. The children, who had gone to school Monday morning primed for mutiny, surrendered their hearts in a body to Miss Northrop by night; three days later, Uncle Billy Green's niece, who taught the primary school, gave in adoring allegiance; by the end of the week everybody who had seen her was her advocate. It was certainly an unprecedented thing that Judge Garvey's best exertions should come to naught, because of a woman's way of smiling and speaking; but Miss Northrop's tenure of the school was secure. It

was not entirely speech and smile, however. Miss Northrop was interested in everything, and consequently had common ground with everybody; and she met each one on that ground, not so much ignoring as temporarily forgetting differences.

The year wore on from gray to gray; the parching north wind poured down the plain and darkened the air with gritty dust; the sky, though cloudless, grew murkier every day. Then the wind shifted to the south, and the sky grew darker yet with surging heaps of clouds, and at last down came the late November rain; and next morning Miss Northrop could see, like a miraculous creation of the night, up and down every east-and-west street, a range of azure mountains along either horizon, snow-crowned, clear-cut, against an exquisite blue sky. Every two or three weeks the surge of clouds would come rolling up with the south wind, and the rain would come down in torrents for days, till the Sacramento, yellow with mud, roared level with its banks; and then the storm would break away, and there would be a week or two of blue sky and brilliant air and green earth.

One Sunday in March, between the early and the latter rains, Miss Northrop and Will Strong walked out together several miles over the plain. The gravel had long disappeared under green burclover and _filaria_, thickly dotted with the little yellow clover blossoms, the lilac ones of the _filaria_, and with small blue gillias. The flocks and herds had been driven down from the mountains where they spend their summers and autumns, and the air was full of the bleating of lambs. Up and down either horizon, converging toward the north, were the long ranks of the Sierras and Coast Range, deep blue, ruggedly tipped with white peaks of all shapes--the Lassen Buttes, the Yallo Balleys, and many a lesser one. Northward, in the interval between the ranges, miles and miles away, the solitary peak of Shasta rose above the dark oak-knolls, sharp-white from base to tip, against a stainless sky. They sat down on the warm clover, beside a noisy yellow stream that ran full to its banks on its way to the Sacramento. Winifred pushed back her hat, dropped her hands in her lap, and let her senses be played upon by the delicious air, the blue and white of mountains and sky and clouds, the luminous green, the rushing of water close by, and the bleating of flocks in the distance. It gave Will a good chance to watch her face--the sweetness of the mouth; the nobility of the level brows; the frankness of the eyes; the soft wave of her hair. There was a marked sadness in her face in repose; to wonder why, was to transgress the code of loyal humility that Will set himself; he had not even considered it due chivalry to speculate, much less ask, as to the reason of so amazing a phenomenon as her presence in California at all, and the incongruity of her school-teaching. Her pose was perfect, and yet nothing could be more unconscious. Was that marvellous spontaneity, that simple dignity, the regular thing among the men and women Winifred belonged with? It made him feel left very far out to think so. How incapable of effort for admiration she was, yet how

invariably admirable!

She caught him looking at her, in time. "What is it?" she said, simply.

He colored with some confusion, but confessed a piece of his thought. "I was wondering if you really do not care at all for admiration. Most people would think they got the good of their living in being praised a fraction as much as you've been. If that's impertinent I beg your pardon; you asked me."

The portion of aristocrat's pride that was in Winifred was largely concentrated in an objection to talking of herself or letting other people do it; so she looked a little annoyed. She began with some constraint:

"Yes--I care--at first--when it is the right one that praises. But there is always a reaction of self-distrust. It seems humiliating," she went on more frankly, "to have been praised for having done some common thing--solved a problem, or written a poem, or handled a piano--a little more or less cleverly, when one comes to think what education and art are. And personal admiration--that always seems a contemptible sort of folly, if you think of what great things there are to do and be in the world, and the lives the great lonely souls have lived."

"Your achievement seems little to you," said Will, with some gloom, "because, I suppose, more always opens to you. To me, who have made none--"

"Why, Will," she cried, with the most genuine dissent. "You have done more than almost any one I know. Do you call it nothing to do a college curriculum alone and under all sorts of hindrances? And I know that it was done well and thoroughly."

"Oh, yes," he said, indifferently, tossing bits of clover into the stream, "I could have passed an A. B. fast enough. But you know better than I do, Winifred, that that's the least of a college course. I've seen fellows that had to work their way through and had no spare time or energy, and they always lacked a great deal of the college flavor; the education didn't permeate 'em. Then there are other things--music, art, social opportunities, capacity of expression--that are no slight things to miss; they make up more of first-class living than Greek optatives or the equation of a surface. It isn't really possible for a man, not backed by circumstances, to get himself into a position that some are born to." He let the clover be and looked up. "Oh, I'm not growling, Winifred," he said, hastily, smiling, as he saw her about to speak eagerly. "I'm only making philosophical observations, and using myself as an illustration. Why in the world should I growl to find

myself stranded half way up, when there is a townful of people behind us clear down at the bottom, and no more their fault than mine? Why should I mind that I am left out from the best chances, any more than that a thousand other fellows are? 'What Act of Legislature was there that' _I_ should be cultured?"

She was leaning forward with her irresistible eyes full on his, and face and voice vivified with that sympathetic expressiveness that makes speech count for far more than the words.

"Will, that is true," she cried, "but it is only part of the truth. 'Close thy' Carlyle; 'open thy' Emerson. It's true, you have missed some things that you deserved to have and that many of your inferiors have for nothing. But your life is only begun, and your ability and pluck can do so much that you needn't waste regret on anything they may fail to do. Even if circumstances be unconquerable that stand between you and some good things, are the things you have gained instead of less value?--your courage and patience, your self-reliance and trustworthiness and helpfulness? Why, Will, _character_ is worth more than knowledge of art, or familiarity with good society; just to live bravely is worth more than all the rest. Do you suppose I would exchange your companionship for that of a dozen 'cultured' people who could talk to me about 'sincere furniture'"--this was in the last decade, remember--"and Rauss's heads, as you can't, and who never showed me one spark of genuine feeling about the great things of life, as you can?"

Will was overwhelmed. Winifred had talked of his affairs much, following them with unvarying interest, but of himself or herself, never; and it was actually a new idea to the young fellow that she could have any very high opinion of him. Moreover, it was the first time he had heard her speak with unveiled and ardent feeling.

"You do not mean"--and he formed his words with difficulty--"that I could meet on equal ground people that--such people as _your_ associates."

"No; you would meet most of them on higher ground. If they didn't know it, that would be their discredit. I should think you could see that," she added, in a quick, parenthetic averse way, "from _their_ associate. If you want to get a higher opinion of the value of your life, compare it with an ordinary, foolish, useless one--like mine." She gave him no chance to answer that, but was the next moment on her feet, suggesting that they walk on, and wishing they were not to stop short of the Lassen Buttes, whose apparent nearness, scores of miles distant as they were, was still a perpetual surprise to her eastern eyes.

When everything has been made ready for it, a few sentences may easily

make or mark an era in life; and it is probable that if Miss Northrop had not in effect told young Strong he was quite good enough for her, he might have remained her contented vassal for years. Six months of being her nearest friend worked their result, to be sure; but the humility they were gnawing at was of mediævally tough fibre, and of twice six years' growth. His depreciation of himself, however, had only meant sense of distance from her; therefore, his sense of the significance of her speech was enormous. He felt his relation to her changed; he was shaken from all his moorings, and thrown into a mighty agitation that possessed him night and day, and only grew with time. For this was what it all came to: Was the distance between Winifred and himself greater than the distance between her and any other man? And when he had once thought that, the gate was open, and the besieging host marched in and took possession of every corner of him with longing and desire and a madness of tenderness.

He thought of nothing else. He wrote his editorials and set type under an unceasing sense of it, as people have done brain-work and finger-work to an accompaniment of unceasing physical pain. For there was nothing joyous about it to him; it was all a bitter pain of mad desire to be something to her--to secure her, somehow, before this great, dark future swept her away from him. And yet the latter rains came and went, the green faded from the ground, the mountains grew dimmer and duller, and at last disappeared in the summer murk, before he took in his own mind the next step--from lover to suitor, as before from vassal to lover.

He did so simply because he could not stand it any longer. It stood to reason that there must be a way out of such active torments. And, after all, why not he as well as any other man? It was absurd to suppose that Winifred could ever be in love with any man, as a man would be with her. It occurred to Will that the thing to do was natural enough, after all--not to ask Winifred's love, but to offer her his. And he walked down to Mrs. Stutt's to do it, one August evening, a little before school opened after vacation. He was in good spirits, too; to come to action and to speech, after so long repression, was an inestimable relief. And she had been doubly friendly to him all this time.

Mrs. Stutt was in her little strip of grass and oleanders. "That you, Mr. Strong?" she called out cheerily as he lifted the gate-latch. "Well, Miss Northrop's in the sitting-room, I s'pose. You go right in, and I'll come in when I've done my watering."

"Thank you," said Will, absently, and walked on into the house. Winifred was not in the dark little sitting-room. He walked to the open window and stood there, expecting her to come in presently. There were veils of Madeira vine over the window, just opening their whitish tassels of bloom, and the air was full of the smell of them. Mrs.

Stutt began to water the grass outside, and the shower of water from her hose glimmered through the Madeira vine; the noise of the water came to him, and the crying of crickets, and the smell of the freshly wet earth. Then he heard a step on the porch, and saw Winifred go down the short path to the gate. He could see by her white dress that she stood still there; so he went out, too, to join her. Mrs. Stutt was watering at the other side of the house now, and the two were alone.

Will stopped a moment in the darkness and faint odor of a great oleander, a few feet from the motionless girl at the gate, to realize well the grace of her dim white figure, and her unconscious attitude. She stood in a weary way, with her head a little fallen back, and her hands hanging loosely clasped before her. There was so much and so incomprehensible emotion in the attitude, that Will felt vaguely thrust out into another world from that where her interests lay. She had not heard him approach, for the train from the south was just coming to a stand at the station, not a stone's throw off, and there was a great noise of jarring cars, and shouting men, and escaping steam, and ringing bell. He waited till the noise should be quite over. Some one came walking rapidly from the station; Will, glancing at the dark figure, thought it had, even in this dimness, an unfamiliar look. It paused close by the gate.

"Winifred!"

Will did not know the voice; the tone turned him blind and dizzy.

Winifred started violently, and turned; she clasped her hands tightly, and lifted them to her breast in a frightened way, as she fell back a step.

"Oh, my God!" she cried, under her breath. There was a rattle of the gate-latch, a sharp flying open of the gate, and the stranger held her in his arms.

"My darling, my darling!" he said, with an infinite tenderness. "Did you think you could hide anywhere in all this wide world where I should not find you?"

For just an instant she yielded to his clasp--then she drew back. "You must not," she said, softly, with unmistakable pain in her voice. "You know that. I thought if I was utterly out of sight or hearing, you would forget me, and _I_ might--forget myself."

He broke in before she had fairly spoken. "You were mistaken, Winifred; there was no one between us. O my foolish little hot-head! if you had not been so headlong in your self-sacrifice--if you had only waited till I came back--I could have showed you in ten minutes that there was no place for it. Mollie is married to John Gates and is

very happy. And you and I--my little girl, how nearly our two lives have been spoiled! Sweetheart," he said, laughing with a shaky voice, "I think I shall never dare let go of you again"--and he drew her back to him.

She hesitated--surrendered--clung to him with a long sobbing breath. "Oh, I have wanted you so, I have _wanted_ you so!" she cried. "Oh, don't be a dream and melt away this time!"

Will Strong, standing close in the darkness of the oleander, acquiring a life-long association with smell of Madeira vine and oleander and wet earth, cry of crickets and noise of sprinkling water, gathered himself together enough to creep away. He was _going_ to realize it pretty soon, he thought; he did not yet; it seemed likely to be beyond endurance when he did. As he passed the door some one opened it, and the lamp-light streamed about him; Winifred looked around and saw his face for an instant, and then he had slipped away through a side gate.

He walked out from town across miles of dark plain, until he came to the empty channel of the stream by which they had sat in March. Underfoot not a blade of grass or green thing; no stranger would have believed that living thing had ever grown there. The flocks and herds had long since gone to the mountain pastures. The dry channel between shelvy banks of gravel showed white in the unclouded yet dull starlight. The air was lifeless, and faintly tainted with smoke from forest fires in the mountains.

Will threw himself down on his face, clutching with his fingers at the gritty dirt. He knew as surely then, looking forward to his life, as he will know at the end looking back, that this would never be an out-lived romance. Nor could he creep back into that temple of dreams from which Winifred's own hand had lured him--it had crumbled to dust behind him. Nor was he like one who, losing a woman, loses only his best pleasure and best ambition; she was the vital condition to every pleasure, every ambition; losing her, he lost all. The realization clutched him by this time like a tiger. There was not a living creature within miles; a man might go down to primal depths, might drop even the restraint of the human in outcries and struggles as free as a tortured beast's. It may be that solitude sees more such scenes than a decently decorous world would like to think.

Yet there was a sense upon him of some moral demand, some decision to be made; and in time he began to try to collect himself for it. It would seem as if there could hardly be a position that left less for him to decide. There was no question of renouncing--he had never had anything to renounce. Nevertheless, his instinct was correct in urging him to a moral conflict and a momentous decision. The question was simply whether he could pick up his life again, could find faith that anything was worth living for; or whether life was to be a hollow

going through the forms--frustrated, purposeless, full of brooding regret and jealousy, shame, and sense of wrong. But he could not drag his bruised mind up to the question; he could not even think what it was. He lifted himself up, stepped down into the dry channel, and knelt on the white stones, obeying old association with the attitude; laid his arms and head on a shelf of the bank, and let the stunned and nerveless will lie passive, while the accumulated forces of years--of generations--passion and pain and despair and love, shame and bitterness and loyalty--trampled back and forth over him, fighting out for him his battle.

It was deathly, aggressively still; not an insect to chirp, not a tree to rustle; only bare earth and sodden air. After a long time Will raised his head and threw it back, looking up at the dull stars, while his outstretched hands lay clasped before him; he began to breathe more deeply. Not many minutes later he rose and walked homeward across the dim, wide waste.

It was afternoon of the next day when he stood at Mrs. Stutt's door again. Mrs. Stutt looked at him with the embarrassment of conscious pity as she admitted him. People had been looking at him all day, on the street and in the office, with the same embarrassment and pity. Miss Northrop was packing, the good woman said; and, in an answer to her call, Winifred came out from her room into the little sitting-room. She, too, was evidently under agitation and embarrassment. Will had no doubt, from his first sight of her face, that she had seen and understood his haggard flight the evening before. He was himself entirely calm, as he held out his hand with a grave smile in silence.

Winifred tried to speak naturally.

"I had just sent a note to you, Will," she said, as they sat down.

"About the school, I suppose," he answered, quietly. "You are going away at once?"

"Yes." There she stopped, with her eyes downcast. She looked up to his face and caught her breath to speak, stopped, and began again.

"You have been very good to me all this year--" there she hesitated. Her difficulty was to choose her words so as to ignore his secret, and yet not part from him in a cold or inadequate way.

He rose, and crossed over to her.

"Winifred," he said gently, "you are distressed on my account; and so it is better that I should speak of what otherwise it would be better to ignore. I want you to know that you have not harmed me."

She rose quickly at that, and they stood near together, with their eyes fixed on each other's; the fulness of expression in her face seemed to take the place of answer. He went on steadily, speaking low:

"I have thought it all over, and I find these two things stronger than any pain that may have come to me. Winifred, I cannot do you this wrong, to make you the instrument of evil to me. That is one of the two things. And the other is that there is nothing to reproach any one with; no one has done wrong; there is no cause for shame, or resentment, or bitterness--only for clean pain. Pain is no great evil, Winifred, when it is clean, no matter how sharp."

He smiled at her tranquilly enough as he spoke. In truth, he was not unhappy at the moment. It is not during but after the parting interview that the pinch comes. She answered him only with her deeply attentive look, and he went on:

"I did not come to those convictions; they came to me; or rather, they were in me, and bore down all the other feelings. All the noisy passions dropped away before them, and left just those clear voices in my soul. They made all my love and loyalty work together, instead of tearing me in opposite directions. For, see, Winifred, hasn't it been our moral faith for years that to do spiritual harm to another is the greatest evil that can befall one, and to do him spiritual benefit, the greatest good? All these years since we were in school together, I have been proud to think that it could be only a good to you to have me think of you as I have thought, because it was only a good to me. And I will not be so disloyal now as to let my life be spoiled because of you."

Winifred looked at him aghast. "All these years!" It was a revelation intolerable at first shock to a woman that was no coquette.

"I think it was all the time dimly in my mind what your last year had been; at last I went out of my life and into yours. I want you to understand that I do not think of it with bitterness, because I entered so little into it; I realize, Winifred"--his voice broke from its steadiness--"that you have been good, good in it all. If you had not been--if you had trifled with me--I think I should be at the bottom of the river to-day. But since no one has wronged me," he went on more quietly, "since nothing monstrous or unnatural has befallen me, everything I believed in has the same claim on me as ever."

"And I want you to know that you need not mind my love, Winifred." She dropped her eyes and stood mute. "It is something you may be willing and glad to have without troubling yourself because you cannot return it. For any pain that has happened, do not trouble yourself about that either--if I don't mind it, you needn't," he said, smiling

a little, with a certain manly sweetness quite new to him. "I find one gains something in having no longer to struggle with pain and try to keep her at arm's length."

She looked up then, and cried out passionately. "O Will, Will, if only there was anything in all this world I could do to make it up to you!"

"There is nothing to make up," he said. "I would rather have pain from you than pleasure from any one else. But there is something that you can do; this: not to feel my love a burden laid upon you, an annoyance or trespass, an anxiety or self-reproach--or anything that will make you want to get rid of it," he finished, smiling again; "and to let me give you all I wish, on the condition that I ask no return. And if, in a few years, I should ask to come and live near you, and be good friends--may I? It would be hard," he urged, less quietly, "that I should have to lose your friendship, when I ask nothing more. Would you take away the crumbs from me, just because I have lost the loaf?"

"Is that best, Will?" she began, anxious and hesitating. "Oh, I mean for you. It isn't possible that you can always--think of me--so. There is no reason. If you do not see me--somebody else--"

"Have I been seeing you these dozen years?" he said, very gently. "You may trust me to know what is best for me. Why think--think a moment, dear friend, and you will understand. You, of all people, can understand the plane I want you to take me on."

Winifred's eyes kindled and her face flushed. "I see. I do understand. I can meet you on your own plane, and I can trust your friendship and you. I am not afraid to have you come--after a year or two."

"Thank you," he said, shaken as he had not been.

"It is because you are very noble that any good can come out of this harm," she went on, with an eloquent tremor in her voice. "I can see that before very long I shall be, as you said, willing--glad--for so great a gift--only always sorry for your sake. I am very grateful now--I cannot tell you how great a thing I think it is--from such a man as you."

They had both become embarrassed and shy now, and both stood silent to recover their ease. "You leave by this evening's train?" he asked in a minute.

"Yes."

"Then this is good-by."

"For a while."

They moved together to the door. As they reached it, Will turned and held out his hand, with an attempt at a smile. They stood a few moments with hands clasped. Winifred's downcast eyes were filling.

"Good-by, Winifred," he said.

"Good-by," she answered, faintly. A minute later she had thrown herself sobbing on her bed, and he was walking down the street.

He met Winifred's lover, coming from the ticket-office--a gentleman high-bred and handsome in every line, a scholar by his appearance, a good man by his eyes, a good companion by his smile. There were all those differences between him and Will that the young man had talked of and Winifred in all sincerity had called nothing; and, moreover, she would never in the world have loved him if there had not been. The girl was an aristocrat after all, when it came to a question not of friendship but love. And Will knew it; love is penetrating enough to divine that much from scanty data. He looked at the stranger with a sort of transferred reverence--what a king of men must he be whom Winifred could crown! And if he did not look at him without a blinding pang, it was, nevertheless, a test of the thoroughness of the night's work that there was neither bitterness nor aversion in it. Something, that sense of having disarmed pain--not dodged nor outwitted it, but disarmed it forever--must have been in Winkelried's consciousness as the spears pressed in.

But, after all, it is taking the second place that costs--not being there after it has been once sincerely and thoroughly accepted. Bunyan knew long ago that it was easy walking in the Valley of Humiliation, once you had come safely down.

On the street an acquaintance met Strong and turned to walk beside him. It was the man who would not trust Judge Garvey out of sight with his baby's silver mug.

"I was just going to your office," he said. "It's something very important." He spoke with a marked friendliness, and a transparently covert sympathy. "You see," he went on, confidentially, "we fellows that have been against Garvey begin to think our minority's about over. The whole affair of Miss Northrop has hurt him. He was shabby when first she came, about that Coakley business, and he's been ugly about her ever since in a sneaking sort of way. Such a lady, too! And there's a thing come out to-day--if you'll excuse my speaking of it." He showed a certain embarrassment. "Uncle Billy Green gave it away first--he knew, being postmaster--but Garvey's been boasting of it himself, too, in the bar-room. You know you used to write to a fellow in the States, and haven't written to him so much lately."

"Yes, I know," said Strong. The man caught a hint of what he did not say in what he did.

"Uncle Billy gives away any interesting point he gets in the post-office," he said, apologetically. "You knew that before, Strong. Well, Garvey got out of him, too, that Miss Northrop didn't have nor write any letters; and he got it into his head she was hiding. Anybody could see she wasn't used to working for a living--"

"Look here--"

"Bless you, Strong, I sha'n't say a word disrespectful to her. This is something you'd ought to know. He just did up a 'Clarion' with some notice about the school in it, and her name marked, and sent it to that fellow you used to write to; and he wrote on the margin: 'Please forward to Miss N.'s friends.' He said in the bar-room, to-day, that he didn't know just what would come of it, but it stood to reason if she was on the hide, it would damage her or you, somehow."

"It hasn't, however," said Strong. "But if I stayed round the bar-room--"

"Oh, we choked him off. I tell you, Strong, everybody thinks it was a pretty dirty trick. The people don't care so much about his big tricks, but they won't stand any such small ones. No money in it, either--only spite! Well, the long and the short is--it's only a few weeks till convention; and if you'll take hold now while they're mad, you can name your own man for Senate, and we'll send you to Assembly."

"I don't want to go to Assembly," said Will, standing on his office-step. "I'll gladly do my best to defeat Garvey for Senate."

"Well, you just decide on your man, and bring him out in your next paper and we'll elect him. The people are strong for you just now. And I should think you would look on going to Assembly as a sort of duty--purify politics, you know."

"Well--I'll think about it." And young Strong walked into his shabby office, stopped to give Jim directions, then went in behind his screen, and sat down to write a proper editorial for beginning the reform campaign.

From: Project Gutenberg's Stories by American Authors, Volume 9, by Various

Concerning Emperors

I. God Send the Regicide

Would that the lying rulers of the world
Were brought to block for tyrannies abhorred.
Would that the sword of Cromwell and the Lord,
The sword of Joshua and Gideon,
Hewed hip and thigh the hosts of Midian.
God send that ironside ere tomorrow's sun;
Let Gabriel and Michael with him ride.
God send the Regicide.

II. A Colloquial Reply: To Any Newsboy

If you lay for Iago at the stage door with a brick
You have missed the moral of the play.
He will have a midnight supper with Othello and his wife.
They will chirp together and be gay.
But the things Iago stands for must go down into the dust:
Lying and suspicion and conspiracy and lust.
And I cannot hate the Kaiser (I hope you understand.)
Yet I chase the thing he stands for with a brickbat in my hand.

Niagara

I

Within the town of Buffalo
Are prosy men with leaden eyes.
Like ants they worry to and fro,
(Important men, in Buffalo.)
But only twenty miles away
A deathless glory is at play:
Niagara, Niagara.

The women buy their lace and cry:--
"O such a delicate design,"
And over ostrich feathers sigh,

By counters there, in Buffalo.
The children haunt the trinket shops,
They buy false-faces, bells, and tops,
Forgetting great Niagara.

Within the town of Buffalo
Are stores with garnets, sapphires, pearls,
Rubies, emeralds aglow,--
Opal chains in Buffalo,
Cherished symbols of success.
They value not your rainbow dress:--
Niagara, Niagara.

The shaggy meaning of her name
This Buffalo, this recreant town,
Sharps and lawyers prune and tame:
Few pioneers in Buffalo;
Except young lovers flushed and fleet
And winds hallooing down the street:
"Niagara, Niagara."

The journalists are sick of ink:
Boy prodigals are lost in wine,
By night where white and red lights blink,
The eyes of Death, in Buffalo.
And only twenty miles away
Are starlit rocks and healing spray:--
Niagara, Niagara.

Above the town a tiny bird,
A shining speck at sleepy dawn,
Forgets the ant-hill so absurd,
This self-important Buffalo.
Descending twenty miles away
He bathes his wings at break of day--
Niagara, Niagara.

II

What marching men of Buffalo
Flood the streets in rash crusade?
Fools-to-free-the-world, they go,
Primeval hearts from Buffalo.
Red cataracts of France today
Awake, three thousand miles away
An echo of Niagara,
The cataract Niagara.

Mark Twain and Joan of Arc

When Yankee soldiers reach the barricade
Then Joan of Arc gives each the accolade.

For she is there in armor clad, today,
All the young poets of the wide world say.

Which of our freemen did she greet the first,
Seeing him come against the fires accurst?

Mark Twain, our Chief, with neither smile nor jest,
Leading to war our youngest and our best.

The Yankee to King Arthur's court returns.
The sacred flag of Joan above him burns.

For she has called his soul from out the tomb.
And where she stands, there he will stand till doom.

.

But I, I can but mourn, and mourn again
At bloodshed caused by angels, saints, and men.

From: The Project Gutenberg EBook of Chinese Nightingale, by Vachel Lindsay

Preludes

I

The winter evening settles down
With smell of steaks in passageways.
Six o'clock.
The burnt-out ends of smoky days.
And now a gusty shower wraps
The grimy scraps
Of withered leaves about your feet
And newspapers from vacant lots;
The showers beat
On broken blinds and chimney-pots,
And at the corner of the street
A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps.
And then the lighting of the lamps.

II

The morning comes to consciousness
Of faint stale smells of beer
From the sawdust-trampled street
With all its muddy feet that press
To early coffee-stands.

With the other masquerades
That time resumes,
One thinks of all the hands
That are raising dingy shades
In a thousand furnished rooms.

III

You tossed a blanket from the bed,
You lay upon your back, and waited;
You dozed, and watched the night revealing
The thousand sordid images
Of which your soul was constituted;
They flickered against the ceiling.
And when all the world came back
And the light crept up between the shutters,
And you heard the sparrows in the gutters,
You had such a vision of the street
As the street hardly understands;
Sitting along the bed's edge, where
You curled the papers from your hair,

Or clasped the yellow soles of feet
In the palms of both soiled hands.

IV

His soul stretched tight across the skies
That fade behind a city block,
Or trampled by insistent feet
At four and five and six o'clock;
And short square fingers stuffing pipes,
And evening newspapers, and eyes
Assured of certain certainties,
The conscience of a blackened street
Impatient to assume the world.

I am moved by fancies that are curled
Around these images, and cling:
The notion of some infinitely gentle
Infinitely suffering thing.

Wipe your hand across your mouth, and laugh;
The worlds revolve like ancient women
Gathering fuel in vacant lots.

Rhapsody on a Windy Night

Twelve o'clock.
Along the reaches of the street
Held in a lunar synthesis,
Whispering lunar incantations
Dissolve the floors of memory
And all its clear relations,
Its divisions and precisions,
Every street lamp that I pass
Beats like a fatalistic drum,
And through the spaces of the dark
Midnight shakes the memory
As a madman shakes a dead geranium.

Half-past one,
The street lamp sputtered,
The street lamp muttered,
The street lamp said,
"Regard that woman
Who hesitates toward you in the light of the door
Which opens on her like a grin.
You see the border of her dress

Is torn and stained with sand,
And you see the corner of her eye
Twists like a crooked pin."

The memory throws up high and dry
A crowd of twisted things;
A twisted branch upon the beach
Eaten smooth, and polished
As if the world gave up
The secret of its skeleton,
Stiff and white.
A broken spring in a factory yard,
Rust that clings to the form that the strength has left
Hard and curled and ready to snap.

Half-past two,
The street-lamp said,
"Remark the cat which flattens itself in the gutter,
Slips out its tongue
And devours a morsel of rancid butter."
So the hand of the child, automatic,
Slipped out and pocketed a toy that was running along
the quay.
I could see nothing behind that child's eye.
I have seen eyes in the street
Trying to peer through lighted shutters,
And a crab one afternoon in a pool,
An old crab with barnacles on his back,
Gripped the end of a stick which I held him.

Half-past three,
The lamp sputtered,
The lamp muttered in the dark.

The lamp hummed:
"Regard the moon,
La lune ne garde aucune rancune,
She winks a feeble eye,
She smiles into corners.
She smooths the hair of the grass.
The moon has lost her memory.
A washed-out smallpox cracks her face,
Her hand twists a paper rose,
That smells of dust and old Cologne,
She is alone With all the old nocturnal smells
That cross and cross across her brain.
The reminiscence comes
Of sunless dry geraniums
And dust in crevices,

Smells of chestnuts in the streets
And female smells in shuttered rooms
And cigarettes in corridors
And cocktail smells in bars."

The lamp said,
"Four o'clock,
Here is the number on the door.
Memory!
You have the key,
The little lamp spreads a ring on the stair,
Mount.
The bed is open; the tooth-brush hangs on the wall,
Put your shoes at the door, sleep, prepare for life."

The last twist of the knife.

Morning at the Window

They are rattling breakfast plates in basement kitchens,
And along the trampled edges of the street
I am aware of the damp souls of housemaids
Sprouting despondently at area gates.
The brown waves of fog toss up to me
Twisted faces from the bottom of the street,
And tear from a passer-by with muddy skirts
An aimless smile that hovers in the air
And vanishes along the level of the roofs.

From: The Project Gutenberg Etext of Poems, by T. S. Eliot

THE UGLINESS OF MODERN LIFE

Pierre Loti has lately written in an album published at Schweningen for charity the following passages, which will be new to the majority of English readers:--

'The end of April is the season of change, when the Judas trees all along the shores of the Bosphorus are in flower. Nowhere else in the world does one find so many Judas trees as here, where the two extremities of Asia and of Europe are face to face. There are violet-hued tufts and violet-hued alleys; an excess of violet colour so intense, and so unusual, that one's sight is dazzled and bewildered by it. And the wisteria too, which garlands the old eaves of houses with its millions of clusters, hangs out wreaths of a lighter lilac from all the hamlets of grey timber which lean down over the water. This Bosphorus is a great winding river, but a river which has in it the life and the seduction of the sea. The hills on its two shores are covered by palaces, by mosques, by cottages and by tombs, all surrounded by and buried in gardens. And here in the month of April, under this sky still veiled and softened by the clouds of the North, there is a luxury of foliage and blossom in which this violet tone of the Judas trees is dominant, and shines beside the dark and ghost-like cypress groves.

'There are on earth other places grander, and perhaps more beautiful; certainly there are none of greater power to charm. This scenery of the Bosphorus, from which no stranger ever escapes, is due to the Oriental mystery which still broods on it; it comes from the great closed harems of which the upper storeys hang over the waves; it comes from the veiled women whom we see in the shadow of the gardens, and in the slender caïques which pass. But this Turkish witchery is fading, alas! Year by year, more and more, great gaps are made in the ranks of the ancient impenetrable buildings, with their grated windows, which plunge their walls into the water and which one could enter from the water, as at Venice; and with them go the slender caïques, the costumes, and the women's veils.

'Already, even since last spring, Therapia seems to exist no longer, masked as it is by a gigantic and hideous caravanserai; the exquisite Anatoli Hissar is disfigured by an American college, of a sinister ugliness, which has stuck itself above

the ancient castle with an imbecile air of domination.

'And everywhere it is the same story, whether on the shores of Asia or the shores of Europe; frightful new buildings cumber the ground and factory chimneys rise beside minarets of which they are the miserable caricatures. In vain do the Judas trees continue their beautiful flowering; the Bosphorus will soon perish, destroyed by idiotic speculators. And the Turks, my dear friends the Turks, have the indolence or fatalism to let such destruction be wrought every day under their eyes!'

Thus Loti with his poet's soul, his prose which is a golden lyre; and it seems to me as I translate his words that his lament for the Judas trees and the Bosphorus is but the embodiment of a lament which sighs over the whole world. The beauty of the earth is dying, dying like a creature with a cancer in its breast.

The writer of the Foundations of Belief thinks that the earth was made for man; if this presumptuous conviction had indeed any foundation at all what an ingrate would the recipient of the gift have proved himself, what an imbecile, as Loti calls him!

The loss of beauty from the world is generally regarded as the purely sentimental grievance of imaginative persons; but it is not so; it is a loss which must impress its vacuity fatally on the human mind and character. It tends, more than any other loss, to produce that apathy, despondency, and cynical indifference which are so largely characteristic of the modern temper.

The people are taught to think that all animal life may be tortured and slaughtered at pleasure; that physical ills are to be feared beyond all others, and escaped at all vicarious cost; that profit is the only question of importance in commerce; that antiquity, loveliness, and grace are like wild flowers, mere weeds to be torn up by a steam harrow. This is not the temper which makes noble characters, or generous and sensitive minds. It is the temper which accumulates wealth, and which flies readily to war to defend that wealth; but which is absolutely barren of all impersonal sympathy, of all beautiful creation.

Taken as a whole, artists have the kindest natures and the happiest temperaments of any body of men. Why? because their minds are always more or less susceptible to the impressions and influences of beauty--beauty of line, of hue, of proportion, of suggestion; beauty alike of the near and of the far; and they surround themselves with their own ideals of these in such measure as their powers permit. But, even in artists, modern life tends to deform these ideals, and in any exhibition of modern paintings ninety-nine out of a hundred of these works will be ugly; they will display, perhaps, admirable technique, complete mastery of detail, fine brush work, perhaps unexceptionable

drawing, but the combination of these qualities will produce merely a sense of ugliness on the retina of the observer of them.

Unless the man of genius buries himself resolutely in the country and by the sea, as Tennyson did, as Clausen does, he cannot altogether escape the influence of the unloveliness of modern life. It would be impossible to painters and poets to live in Regent's Park or the Avenue de Villiers, in Cromwell Road or the Via Nazionale, or in any of the new quarters of English or Continental towns, unless their instincts of beauty had become dulled and dwarfed by the atmosphere around them; life for any length of time would be insupportable to them under the conditions in which it is of necessity lived in modern cities; and this perversion of their natural instincts makes the tendency to replace beauty by eccentricity and by weirdness fatally frequent. Their critics obey the same influences, and modern art-criticism, like the recent studies of Robert de la Sizeranne on English painting, is characterised by what appears to be a total incapacity to appreciate the quality of beauty, a total insensibility to its absence from modern art.

In sculpture this is as remarkable as in painting, and is still more alarming and painful, the ugliness of realism and of eccentricity being a still more offensive blasphemy in marble than it is in colour. If the most ordinary sense of beauty, as distinguished from deformity, were not extinct in the world, would any one of the monuments erected within the last half century be allowed to disfigure the cities of Europe? Carnot in a frock coat lying in the arms of a female, supposed to represent France, with his boots thrust out towards the spectator; Victor Emmanuel in a cocked hat with his body like a swollen bladder stuck on two wooden ninepins; Peabody sitting in an arm-chair as if he awaited a dentist; old William of Prussia like a child's tin soldier magnified, and with the greater men who made him dwarfed military manikins underneath; black-metal Garibaldi, and Gordons, and Napiers, and Macmahons; Claude Bernard in the act of mutilating a live dog--every imaginable abomination in every street and square of every capital, and even of every noticeable town, proclaim to all the quarters of the globe the debasement of a once pure and lofty art, and the utter ineptitude and vulgarity of modern taste. Of what use is it to attempt to educate the nations when such things as these are set up in their midst?

An English archbishop at a recent Royal Academy banquet said that he hoped the time was near at hand when every child in England would learn to draw. Apart from the gross folly of teaching a child anything for which its own natural talent does not pre-dispose it, and the injury done to the world by the artificial manufacture of millions of indifferent draughtsmen, what use can it be to attempt to awaken perception of art in a generation which is begotten where art and nature are alike persistently outraged?

It is entirely useless to multiply art schools, and desire that every

child should learn to draw, when all the tendencies of modern life have become such that every rule of art is violated in it and every artistic sense offended in an ordinary daily walk.

Amongst even the most cultured classes few have really any sensibility to beauty. Not one in a thousand pauses in the hurried excitements of social life to note beauty in nature; to art there is accorded a passing attention because it is considered *_chic_* to do so; but all true sense of art must be lacking in a generation whose women wear the spoils of tropical birds, slain for them, on their heads and skirts, and whose men find their principal joy for nearly half the year in the slaughter of tame creatures, and bespatter with blood the white hellebore of their winter woods.

Beauty is daily more and more withdrawn from the general life of the people. Fidgety and repressive bye-laws tend to suppress that element of the picturesque which popular life by its liberties, and by its open-air pastimes and peddlings, created for itself. The police are everywhere, and street-life is joyless and colourless. Even within doors, in the houses of poor people, the things of daily usage have lost their old-world charm; the ugly sewing-machine has replaced the spinning-wheel, the cooking-range the spacious open hearth, the veneered machine-made furniture the solid home-made oaken chests and presses, a halfpenny newspaper the old family Bible; whilst out of doors the lads and lasses must not sing or dance, the dog must not play or bark, the chair must not stand out on the pavement, the bells must not ring their chimes, only the cyclist, or the automobilist, lord of all, may tear along and leave broken limbs and bruised flesh of others behind him at his pleasure.

If all feeling for grace and beauty were not extinguished in the mass of mankind at the actual moment, such a method of locomotion as cycling could never have found acceptance; no man or woman with the slightest æsthetic sense could assume the ludicrous position necessary for it. Nor would the auto-car with its stench of petroleum be tolerated for an instant in lanes and roads. Nor could modern dress be endured for a day were there any true sense of fitness, of harmony, and of colour extant in modern times. Even the great Catholic pageants are spoiled in their grouping and splendour by the dull crowds of ill-dressed, dingily clad townfolk which drown their effect like a vast tide of muddy water rising over a garden of flowers. It is impossible for us, even when looking at anything so fine in colour as the Carnival at Milan, the Fête Dieu at Brussels, the Students' Festivals in Munich, or any other of the great Continental processions, to judge of what their extreme beauty must have been when not only the procession itself but all the people in the streets, all the whole vast tide of sightseers, comprising even the very beggars, were equally full of colour and 'composed' harmoniously with the central figures.

A gorgeous spectacle of the streets now, whether it be popular, military, or religious, is swamped in the mass of dull-coloured hues, and grotesquely ugly head-gear, common to the whole population of a city. Its effect may struggle as it will: it sinks under the preponderating mass as a butterfly will be beaten down under a dirty, drenching, city rain.

There is a modern custom in Italy which is typical of the havoc made by avarice and indifference and commerce running together hand in hand. It is the shocking habit of stripping all evergreen trees of their leaves to sell them to chemists, gilders, dyers, and the managers of what in France we call *_pompes funèbres_*. Even magnolias are not spared, and these magnificent trees stand naked and despoiled in nearly all the gardens and parks all over the country. In every town there are now offices for the consignment and purchase of these leaves; to strip and sell, to buy and export them, has become a recognised trade, and hundreds of tons weight are every year, from September to April, sent out of Italy, chiefly to Germany, Austria and Russia. The injury done to the trees is, of course, immeasurable. After a few seasons they become anæmic, dry up, and slowly perish, whilst the aspect of the gardens of which the bay, myrtle, box, laurel, arbutus, and magnolia were of late such conspicuous ornaments is, of course, utterly changed and ruined. Unless by some edict of the State the practice be speedily stopped, another generation will see nothing of those avenues and groves and alleys of evergreen foliage which have been the glory of Italian palaces and villas since the days of the Cæsars.

Follow the architectural history of any city, and you find it during the last half-century the sorrowful record of a pitiful destruction. The great gardens are always the first thing sacrificed. They are swept away, and their places covered by brick and mortar with an incredible indifference. Fine houses, even when of recent construction, like the Pompeian house of Prince Napoleon in Paris, are pulled down out of a mere speculative mania to build something else, or to cut a long, straight street as uninteresting and as unsuggestive as the boxwood protractor which lies on a surveyor's desk.

The greatest crime, or one of the greatest crimes (for there are others black as night), of which the nineteenth century has been guilty has been the driving of the people out of long familiar homes in the name and under the pretext of hygiene, but in fact for the enrichment of contractors, town councillors, and speculators of every kind. It began with Haussmann; it has continued in Paris, and everywhere else, with delirious haste ever since his time, as a burglar may drag a grey-beard to his death. The modern ædiles with their court of ravenous parasites cannot understand, would not deign even to consider, the sorrow of a humble citizen driven out of a familiar little home with nooks and corners filled with memories and a roof-tree dear to generations. Go into an old street of any old city you will, and you will almost

certainly find a delight for the eye in archway and ogive, in lintel and casement, in winding stair and leaning eave; in the wallflowers rooted in the steps, in the capsicum which has seeded itself between the stones, in the swallows' nests under the gargoyle, in the pots of basil and mignonette on the window-sills. But the modern street with its dreary monotony, its long and high blank spaces, its even surfaces where not a seed can cling or a bird can build, what will it say to your eyes or your heart? You will see its dull, pretentious uniformity repeated on either side of you down a mile-long vista, and you will curse it.

It is natural that the people shut up in these structures crave for drink, for nameless vices, for the brothel, the opium den, the cheap eating-house and gaming booth; anything, anywhere, to escape from the monotony which surrounds them and which leaves them no more charm in life than if they were rabbits shut up in a physiologist's experimenting cage, and fed on gin-soaked grains. No one in whom the æsthetic sense was really awakened could dwell in a manufacturing city, or indeed in any modern town. The 'flat,' whether in a 'first-class mansion,' or in a 'block' for the working man, would be more intolerable than a desert island to anyone with a sense of the true charm of life, or, one may add, any sensitiveness to the meaning of the word 'home'; that word which is to be found in every language, though the English people do not think so, and which is one of the sweetest and most eloquent in all tongues. The Americans attach extreme pride to the fact that their 'sky-scrapers' are so advanced that your horses and carriage can be carried up on a lift to the highest storey, and the nags, if it do not make them dizzy, can survey the city in a bird's-eye view. But even this supreme achievement of architects and engineers cannot lend to the cube, shared with a score of others, the charm, the idiosyncrasy, the meaning, the soul, which exhale from the smallest cottage where those who love dwell all alone, through whose lattices a candle shines as a star to the returning wanderer, and on whose lowly roof memory lies like a benediction.

According to the statistics of modern cities the mass of middle-class and labouring-class people change their lodgings or tenements every two or three years; three years is even an unusually long time of residence. What can a people who flit like this, continually, know of the real meaning of a home?

The same restlessness and dissatisfaction which make these classes change their residence so frequently, make the wealthier classes flit in another way, from continent to continent, from capital to capital, from one pleasure-place to another, from one house-party to another, from the yacht to the _rouge-et-noir_ tables, from the bath to the coverside, from the homewoods to the antipodes, in an endless gyration which yields but little pleasure, but which they deem as necessary as cayenne pepper with their hot soup.

I believe that this monotony and lack of interest in the towns which they inhabit fatally affect the minds of those whose lot it is to go to and from the streets in continual toil, and produce in them fatigue, heaviness and gloom; what the scholar and the poet suffer from articulately and consciously, the people in general suffer from inarticulately and unconsciously. The gaiety of nations dies down as the beauty around them pales and passes. They know not what it is that affects them, but they are affected by it none the less, as a young child is hurt by the darkness, though it knows not what dark or light means.

Admit that the poorer people were ill-lodged in the Middle Ages, that the houses were ill-lit, undrained, with the gutter water splashing the threshold, and the eaves of the opposite houses so near that the sun could not penetrate into the street. All this may have been so, but around two-thirds of the town were gardens and fields, the neighbouring streets were full of painted shrines, metal lamps, gargoyles, pinnacles, balconies of hand-forged iron or hand-carved stone, solid doors, bronzed gates, richly-coloured frescoes; and the eyes and the hearts of the dwellers in them had wherewithal to feed on with pleasure, not to speak of the constant stream of many-coloured costume and of varied pageant or procession which was for ever passing through them. Then in the niches there were figures; at the corners there were shrines; on the rivers there were beautiful carved bridges, of which examples are still left to our day in the Rialto and the Vecchio. There were barges with picture-illuminated sails, and pleasure-galleys gay to the sights, and everywhere there were towers and spires, and crenulated walls, and the sculptured fronts of houses and churches and monasteries, and close at hand was the greenness of wood and meadow, the freshness of the unsullied country. Think only what that meant; no miles on miles of dreary suburban waste to travel; no pert aggressive modern villas to make day hateful; no underground railway stations and subways; no hissing steam, no grinding and shrieking cable trams; no hell of factory smoke and jerry-builders' lath and plaster; no glaring geometrical flower beds; but the natural country running, like a happy child laden with posies, right up to the walls of the town.

The cobbler or craftsman, who sat and worked in his doorway, and saw the whole vari-coloured life of a mediæval city pass by him, was a very different being to the modern mechanic, a cypher amongst hundreds, shut in a factory room, amongst the deafening noise of cogwheel and pistons. Even from a practical view of his position, his guilds were a very much finer organisation than modern trades-unions, and did far more for him in his body and his mind. In the exercise of his labour he could then be individual and original, he is now but one-thousandth part of an inch in a single tooth of a huge revolving cogwheel. The mediæval house might be in itself nothing more than a cover from bad weather, but all about it there was infinite variety; all life in the street or alley was richly coloured, even the gutter brawls were medleys of shining steel, and

broken plumes, and many-coloured coats, and brodered badges, a whirl of bright hues, which sent a painter in joy to his palette.

Indoors there were the spinning-wheel, the copper vessels, the walnut presses, the settle by the wide warm hearth, the shrine upon the stairs which the women made fresh with flowers. The river was gay with blazoned hulls and painted sails; over its bridges the processions of church or guild passed like embroidered ribbons slowly unrolling; the workman had a busy life, and often a perilous life, but one still blent with leisure; and the mariners' tales of wondrous lands unknown lent to life that witchery of the remote and unattainable, that delightful thrill of mystery and awe, which to the omniscient and cynical modern soul seem childishness too trivial for words.

Try and realise what life was like when Chaucer walked through Chepe, when Henri de Valois entered Venice, when Philippe le Bel rode through the oak woods of Vincennes, when Petrarca was crowned in Rome, when William Shakespeare sauntered through Warwickshire lanes in cowslip time. Read Michelet's description of a Flemish Burgher, and contrast it with the existence of a shopkeeper in a modern town. Read Froude's description of a sea-going merchantman of Elizabeth's days, and contrast it with the captain of a modern liner. You will at once see how full of colour and individuality were the former lives; how colourless, unlovely, and deprived of all initiative are the latter. Being shorn of freedom, interest, and beauty, modern life finds vent for the feverishness which is cooped up in it in commercial gambling--gambling of all kinds from the Stock Exchange to the tontine, from the foreign loan to the suburban handicap--and existence is but one gigantic lottery. Even when a man goes on an excursion of pleasure he will at starting buy a penny ticket which insures his life for a hundred pounds in case of accident! How can such a populace, always haunted by the fear of death, possibly enjoy?

The great increase in cold-blooded and ferocious murders, done on slight motive and with cynical indifference, is the natural issue of this way of looking at life. Who has no reverence for his own life has naturally none for the lives of others. When a man regards his own existence as a mere parcel to be adequately paid for with a hundred pounds, it follows as the night the day that he cannot regard the life of another as worth twenty shillings. Even death itself is made grotesque by modern science, and the arms and legs and headless trunks flung into the air by the explosion of a bomb are robbed of that mute majesty which the dead body claims by right of nature. They seem no more than shreds of cloth or fragments of chopped wood. It is to be feared, moreover, that the extreme facilities given by science for instantaneous and widespread slaughter will lead gradually to greater indifference still in the public mind to assassination, and it will become so common that it will be scarcely regarded with disapproval.

Many verdicts in various countries show the growing indulgence of the law to murders. In France and Italy especially even a cold-blooded murder will meet scant punishment, whilst one due to sudden passion is almost sure of being either wholly unpunished, or very lightly sentenced. In many cases, even in England, the juries have been of an extraordinary tenderness towards murderers whose guilt they were obliged to admit. At Chester, in England, a few weeks ago, four young colliers who set on and stoned another to death, and flung his body in a canal, were sentenced by Mr Justice Lawrance to the punishment of four months in prison for three of them, and nine months for the ringleader, and nothing more.

Many men of violent temper would think so small a price well paid to rid themselves of a foe or of a rival. The excuse for the colliers was that they had all been drinking. This is an excuse very generally made in these days of culture and compulsory education.

It will be said that this has nothing to do with the presence or absence of beauty in national life. But it has much to do with the callousness and apathy and egotism so general in national life; and the ugliness of surrounding influences and poverty of design in the arts so common in modern times are chief factors in generating this lamentable temper.

Happiness, and its companions goodwill and kindly sympathy, are insensibly suggested and increased by what is beautiful, artistic, and full of good colour and varied design. Even the physical aspect of man is affected by that which it looks upon, that by which it is surrounded, and the French woman was a wise mother who during her pregnancy went to gaze upon the finest works of the Louvre. How much, on the contrary, may the embryo be affected for ill by sordid, dreary, and unlovely conditions which environ the parent during the period of gestation?

There can be, I think, no doubt that physical beauty is degenerating rapidly, and the frequency with which the scrofulous mouth is seen in children, even in children of the aristocracies, is alarming for the future of the race. In the working classes the offspring must be fatally affected by the poisonous trades, the sickening effluvia, the deadly conditions amongst which modern commerce requires its slaves to spend their lives.

Even the country fields are sullied by chemicals and stink of sulphates, phosphates, and human excrements. Agriculture tends to become a mere manufacture, like any other, surrounded by the din of pistons, the fumes of vapour, the jar of wheels.

Beauty is the safest stimulant, the surest tonic, the most precious inspiration; natural beauty first of all, and the beauty of the arts closely following, twinlike handmaids to Aphrodite. But to perceive this the mentally blind are as incapable as the physically blind; and such,

mental cecity is as general in these days as myopy is common in the schoolrooms of this generation.

Every year all cities, and even all towns, are severed farther and farther from the country; every year the electric wires multiply for telegraph and telephone; the tramways and railways increase, the sickening grinding noises common to these methods of locomotion fill the air, and the extraordinary ugliness, which seems attached like a doom to any modern invention, is multiplied on all sides. That, in an age which considers itself educated, such hideous constructions as the great wheels of Chicago and of Earl's Court should attract sane persons as a diversion will alone prove how completely the instinct of correct taste, with its accompanying abhorrence of deformity, has become extinct in all modern crowds.

With the ever-increasing use of steam, the beauty of the sky yearly grows dimmer and more veiled. That a race with any pretensions to education and perception can live contentedly under such a sky as that of London would appear an incredible fact, did we not know that it is an indisputable one. Whoever revisits Paris after a few seasons' absence finds the brilliancy of its life more and more dimmed with every decade by the sully of the atmosphere through the increase of factories, railways and other works, and the invasion by the town of its once beautiful girdle of wood, orchard, and garden. Every year national life everywhere grows less varied, less picturesque, more unlovely, and every year finds the people more contented to dwell with no other horizon than a bank of smoke.

It was monstrous that the selection of the glades and pastures of the New Forest, for military manoeuvres, should ever have been permitted by the British War Office. But the mere fact that it was monstrous, that it was an offence to history and nature, that it disturbed and distressed wild life, that it wounded and outraged the feelings of residents and the sentiments of artists, was a reason all-sufficient to make the modern temper brutally enamoured of the idea. Merely because the despatch of the battalions and field batteries thither was a vandalism, and caused pain to more æsthetic minds, military manoeuvres in the New Forest became all at once a project to be insisted on and carried out at all costs. The same outrage is now being done to Stonehenge.

The modern temper cannot respect, cannot appreciate, cannot love, but it can hate; and its hatred shows itself in damage and destruction everywhere, whether it set fire to the noble old house of the Hanseatic League at Antwerp, pull down the water towers of Dieppe, plant the jerry-builder before the Lateran, drag a railway train up to Murren, or trample down with ill-shod boy-soldiers the thyme and the bracken of the Conqueror's woods and the turf which the Druids trod.

The modern temper resembles those children in Victor Hugo's romance who, being left alone with the beautiful and ancient _Horæ_, find no prank so delightful as to tear from end to end the illuminated text of the book and its perfect miniatures, clapping their hands as each fair thing perishes. Nor is there any indication of the advent of anyone who will take the book of the world from the destroying hands, and save what still remains of its beauty.

There is, on the contrary, every sign that the future will see a still greater domination of that rude, cold, and cruel temper which takes pleasure in innovation and obliteration, and sneers, with contemptuous conceit, at those who are pained by such acts of desecration. It is the same sneer, the same leering and self-satisfied snigger, with which it views the expression and evidence of pity for, and solidarity with, what it is pleased to call the lower animals.

The Langdale Pikes are being pierced and blasted for iron foundries and slate quarries. The great forest of La Haye near Nancy is being destroyed by military fortifications, and by foundries and by factories. All the valley of the Meuse and the Moselle is sullied with factory smoke and blasting powder. The Bay of Amalfi and the shore of Posilippo are defiled by cannon foundries. The Isle of St Elena at Venice is laid waste to serve as a railway factory. All the Ardennes are scorched and soiled, and sickened with stench of smoke and suffocating slag. The Peak Country and the Derwent vales are being scarred and charred for railway lines, mines, and factories. Amsterdam, so late the Venice of the North, is becoming an unmeaning mass of modern insignificance and ugliness; what has been done to the Venice of the South is such outrage that it might wake Tiziano from under his weight of marble in the Frari Church, and call the Veronese from his grave.

To destroy Trinity Hospital in London, and place a brewery in its place is a joy and glory to the modern municipal soul. The Hôtel Dessin in Calais, made sacred to the name of Laurence Sterne, was a pleasant place with an arched entrance and a large courtyard, round whose sides the buildings were grouped; it had vines and greenery of all kinds, and over the archway were little dormer windows. Behind it stretched fair gardens of great extent, and beyond these was a theatre belonging to the hotel. Of late years it had served as a museum for the town, and was thus preserved intact; now it has been pulled down and razed to the ground, and a huge commercial school built in its place. The funicular railways are ruining the whole of the Swiss Alps; the greed of a few speculators and the irreverent folly of the multitude combine to scar the sides of the great mountains and gather on their summits troops of gaping sightseers, to whom the solemnity of the Gletsch Alp or the virginity of the Jungfrau are of no account.

Zermatt, so late a virgin stronghold of the Higher Alps, is now a mere cockney excursion, and sixty thousand trippers invade its solitude with

every summer, plodding like camels in a string, vexing the air with inane noises, offending the mountain stillness with songs to which the bray of mules were music, insulting the crystal clearness of the heavens with the intrusion of their own ludicrous, blatant and imbecile personalities, incapable even of being silent and ashamed. The island of Naxos, whose mere name brings before us so many classic memories in all their loveliness and glory, is being broken up into chips by the emery-workers, and is to be mined for aluminium.

The finest torrent in Scotland is about to be diverted from its course and used for aluminium works. The glory of its waters is to be known no more, merely that some engineers and manufacturers may fill their pockets to the public loss; that some promoters and shareholders, possessing large parliamentary influence, may add to their fortunes. To speak of civilisation, which is a term implying culture, in the same breath with a nation capable of such an action is ludicrous.

The fumes of these aluminium works will, when they are in full blast, emit hydrofluoric acid gas which will destroy all the vegetation on Loch Ness for miles. Yet such is the apathy and want of conscience in modern generations that the annihilation of the Falls of Foyers appears scarcely to meet with any general indignation.

There is no modern mania so dangerous as the present one for meddling with water; no injury more conspicuous and irrevocable than the perpetual interference with lake and stream and torrent.

The lakes of Maggiore, of Como, of Garda, are all being defiled by factories and steam-engines; and even such a writer as De Vogüé can look contentedly forward to a time when such erections will disfigure both banks of the Rhône.

The isles of Lake Lemman serve for commercial and communal purposes. Thirlmere and Loch Katrine have been violated, and all the other English and Scotch lakes will be similarly ravaged. Fucina has been dried up as a speculation, and Trasimene is threatened. The Rhône is already dammed up, and tapped, and tortured, until all its rich alluvial deposits are lost to the soil of Provence.

It would be easy to fill folios with the bare enumeration of places and memories, of sites and scenes of which the destruction has been accomplished within the last few years. To get money for the preservation of anything is well-nigh impossible; but millions flow like water when there is any scheme of destruction. In an age which prates more than any other of its pride in education, the violation of every law of taste, of every tie of association, of every rule of beauty, is always greedily welcomed with a barbaric shout of triumph.

Lath and plaster circuses or theatres are erected by the Mausoleum of

Hadrian, and the miserable caged monkeys of a menagerie pull each other's tails where Raffaele's pavillion stood amidst the nightingale-filled ilex groves.

Frederic Harrison, in his admirable studies of Paris, cannot hide from himself or his readers the loss to art and history which the Haussmannising of the city began, the insanity of the Commune continued, and the barbarism of the present Republic confirms. The ruin of Rome since the Italian occupation is ten times worse and more offensive than even such ruin as would have been entailed by a siege, for it is more vulgar; shell and shot would have destroyed indeed, but they would not have imbecilely and impudently reconstructed. The same sad change awaits, if it has not already overtaken, every city of Europe, and alas! even of Asia. The smoke fiend has entered Jerusalem, and the shriek of the engines has scared the wild dove from her nest in the palm and pomegranate. The Mount of Olives is 'a thing to be done,' and the 'scorcher,' sweating and grinning, drives his wheel through the rose-thickets of Damascus.

Factory chimneys stand as thick in Bombay as in Birmingham, and black trails of foul vapour float over Indus and Ganges; soon their curse will reach the Euphrates. I believe I am correct in saying that the smoke from the funnel of a great steamer or a large factory can be traced for forty-five miles in its passage through the air. Imagine the effect on atmosphere of the continual crossing and re-crossing on ocean routes of tens of thousands of such steamships yearly, of the perpetual belching of such fumes from the innumerable factory shafts annually increased in every part of what is called the civilised world. To India, from England alone, the export of machines and other material for factory erection has been at the enormous rate of £70,000 monthly!

Only let us consider what this means, what destruction of pure light and of fine atmosphere this involves for Hindostan.

The snow-white marbles of the temples, the ivory doors, the silver gates, the rosy clouds, the lotus-laden waters, the golden dawns, the magnolia woods, the camellia groves, the feathered flocks in the bamboo aisles, will all vanish that the smoke fiend may reign alone and the traders who live by him grow rich. The 'light of Asia' is forced to grow foul and dark and sickly, and its radiant suns to be shrouded in pestilent fog in order that the British Gradgrind may put by his 200 per cent. and fold his hands complacently on his rotund belly.

Is the end worth the means?

Is modern trade in truth such a godhead descended on earth that all the loveliness of earth and air, of sky and water should be sacrificed to its demands?

We hear _ad nauseam_ of the gains of modern life, of what is called civilisation: does no one count its losses? It might be well to do so. It might act as a corrective to the inane self-worship which is at once the most ill-founded and the most irritating feature of the age. Perhaps other ages have in turn adored themselves in like manner, but there is not in history any record of it. Its prophets, heroes, sages, each age has either admired or execrated; but I do not think any age has so admired itself as the present age, which has its prototype in William of Germany standing between two sand banks and thinking himself greater than Alexander because his engineers have succeeded in cutting for him a ditch longer than usual.

The modern world is at this moment ruled by two enemies of all beauty: these are commerce and militarism. What the one does not destroy, the other tramples under foot. In earlier times war, terrible always, was beautiful, like its goddess Bellona, in its savage splendour. Its camps, its troops, its standards, its panoply, were all full of colour and of pomp. Even so late as the Napoleonic wars its awfulness was blended with beauty. Now the passage of an army is like the course of so many dirty luggage trains filled with bales of wool or hampers of fish. Its monstrous maw licks up all loveliness as all life which it finds in its way. Its frightful steel cylinders belch death on every gracious and happy thing. It is unenlivened by pageantry, as it is unredeemed by courtesy. Bellona is no more a goddess, but a hag.

Socialism, which has the future of the world in its hands, will probably be unable to abolish war, and will certainly not care for beauty or seek to preserve it. The reconstruction of society which Socialism contemplates will not be a state of things in which the interests of either nature or art will be cherished. Collectivism must of necessity be colourless; equality can afford none of those heights and depths, those lights and shades, which are the essential charm of life as of landscape. When all the arable earth is one huge allotment-ground, a Corot will find no subject for his canvas, not even in his dreams, for his dreams will be dead of inanition.

There can be, I think, no hope that this loss of beauty will not be greater and greater with every year. The tendency, continually increasing in the modern character, is to regard beauty and nature with cynical indifference, stirred, when stirred at all, into active insolence; such insolence as was expressed in the joke of the Chicago citizen who called the plank-walks of his city 'the reafforesting of our town.' It is a temper not merely brutal, but with a leer in it which is more offensive than its brutality.

The great beauty which animal and bird life lends to the earth is doomed to lessen and disappear. The automatic vehicle will render the horse useless; and he will be considered too costly, and too slow, to be kept even as a gambling toy. The dog will have no place in a world which has

no gratitude for such simple sincerity and faithful friendliness as he offers. When wool, and horn, and leather, and meat foods have been replaced by chemical inventions, cattle and sheep will have no more tolerance than the wild buffalo has had in the United States. What are now classed as big game will be exterminated in Asia and Africa, and already in Europe we are told that the pleasure it affords to people to kill them is the sole reason why stags, foxes, and gamebirds are allowed to exist and multiply under artificial protection. All the charm which the races of 'fur and feather' lend to the earth will be lost for ever; for a type destroyed can never be recalled.

Every invention of what is called science takes the human race farther and farther from nature, nearer and nearer to an artificial, unnatural and dependent state. One seems to hear the laugh of Goethe's Mephistopheles behind the hiss of steam; and in the tinkle of the electric bell there lurks the chuckle of glee with which the Tempter sees the human fools take as a boon and a triumph the fatal gifts he has given.

What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? What shall it profit the world to put a girdle about its loins in forty minutes when it shall have become a desert of stone, a wilderness of streets, a treeless waste, a songless city, where man shall have destroyed all life except his own, and can hear no echo of his heart's pulsation save in the throb of an iron piston.

The engine tearing through the disembowelled mountain, the iron and steel houses towering against a polluted sky, the huge cylinders generating electricity and gas, the network of wires cutting across the poisoned air, the overgrown cities spreading like scurvy, devouring every green thing like locusts; haste instead of leisure, Neurasthenia instead of health, mania instead of sanity, egotism and terror instead of courage and generosity, these are the gifts which the modern mind creates for the world. It can chemically imitate every kind of food and drink, it can artificially produce every form of disease and suffering, it can carry death in a needle and annihilation in an odour, it can cross an ocean in five days, it can imprison the human voice in a box, it can make a dead man speak from a paper cylinder, it can transmit thoughts over hundreds of miles of wire, it can turn a handle and discharge scores of death-dealing tubes at one moment as easily as a child can play a tune on a barrel organ, it can pack death and horror up in a small tin case which has served for sardines or potted herrings, and leave it on a window-sill, and cause by it towers to fall, and palaces to crumble, and flames to upleap to heaven, and living men to change to calcined corpses; all this it can do, and much more. But it cannot give back to the earth, or to the soul, 'the sweet wild freshness of morning.' And when all is said of its great inventions and their marvels and mysteries, are they more marvellous or more mysterious than the changes of chrysalis and caterpillar and butterfly, or the rise of

the giant oak from the tiny acorn, or the flight of swallow and nightingale over ocean and continent?

Man has created for himself in the iron beast a greater tyrant than any Nero or Caligula. And what is the human child of the iron beast, what is the typical, notable, most conspicuous creation of the iron beast's epoch?

It is the Cad, vomited forth from every city and town in hundreds, thousands, millions, with every holy day and holy-day. The chief creation of modern life is the Cad; he is an exclusively modern manufacture, and it may safely be said that the poorest slave in Hellas, the meanest fellah in Egypt, the humblest pariah in Asia was a gentleman beside him. The Cad is the entire epitome, the complete blossom and fruit in one, of what we are told is an age of culture. Behold him in the vélodrome as he yells insanely after his kind as they tear along on their tandem machines in a match, and then ask yourself candidly, O my reader, if any age before this in all the centuries of earth ever produced any creature so utterly low and loathsome, so physically, mentally, individually, and collectively hideous? The helot of Greece, the gladiator of Rome, the swash-buckler of Mediæval Europe, nay, the mere pimp and pander of Elizabethan England, of the France of the Valois, of the Spain of Velasquez, were dignity, purity, courage in person beside the Cad of this breaking dawn of the twentieth century; the Cad rushing on with his shrill scream of laughter as he knocks down the feeble woman or the yearling child, and making life and death and all eternity seem ridiculous by the mere existence of his own intolerable fatuity and bestiality.

From:
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MARY'S WEDDING

A PLAY

BY GILBERT CANNAN

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MARY'S WEDDING was first produced at the Coronet Theatre, in May, 1912, with the following cast:

MARY	Miss Irene Rooke
TOM	Mr. Herbert Lomas
ANN	Miss Mary Goulden
MRS. AIREY	Miss Muriel Pratt
BILL AIREY	Mr. Charles Bibby
TWO MAIDS.	
VILLAGERS AND OTHERS.	

SCENE: _The Davis's Cottage_.

NOTE: There is no attempt made in the play to reproduce exactly the Westmoreland dialect, which would be unintelligible to ears coming new to it, but only to catch the rough music of it and the slow inflection of northern voices.

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MARY'S WEDDING

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[_The scene is the living-room in the Davis's cottage in the hill country. An old room low in the ceiling. Ann Davis is at the table in the center of the room untying a parcel. The door opens to admit Tom Davis, a sturdy quarryman dressed in his best and wearing a large nosegay._]

ANN. Well, 'ast seed un?

TOM. Ay, a seed un. 'Im and 'is ugly face--

ANN [_untying her parcel_]. 'Tis 'er dress come just in time an' no more from the maker-up--

TOM. Ef she wouldna do it....

ANN. But 'tis such long years she's been a-waitin'.... 'Tis long years since she bought t' dress.

TOM. An' 'tis long years she'll be a livin' wi' what she's been waitin' for; 'tis long years she'll live to think ower it and watch the thing she's taken for her man, an' long years that she'll find 'un feedin' on 'er, an' a dreary round she'll 'ave of et....

ANN. Three times she 'ave come to a month of weddin' an' three times 'e 'ave broke loose and gone down to the Mortal Man an' the woman that keeps 'arf our men in drink.... 'Tis she is the wicked one, giving 'em score an' score again 'till they owe more than they can ever pay with a year's money.

TOM. 'Tis a fearful thing to drink....

ANN. So I telled 'er in the beginnin' of it all, knowin' what like of man 'e was. An' so I telled 'er last night only.

TOM. She be set on it?

ANN. An', an' 'ere's t' pretty dress for 'er to be wedded in....

TOM. What did she say?

ANN. Twice she 'ave broke wi' 'im, and twice she 'ave said that ef 'e never touched the drink fur six months she would go to be church'd wi' 'im. She never 'ave looked at another man.

TOM. Ay, she be one o' they quiet ones that goes about their work an' never 'as no romantical notions but love only the more for et. There've been men come for 'er that are twice the man that Bill is, but she never looks up from 'er work at 'em.

ANN. I think she must 'a' growed up lovin' Bill. 'Tis a set thing surely.

TOM. An' when that woman 'ad 'im again an' 'ad 'im roaring drunk fur a week, she never said owt but turned to 'er work agin an' set aside the things she was makin' agin the weddin'....

ANN. What did 'e say to 'er?

TOM. Nowt. 'E be 'most as chary o' words as she. 'E've got the 'ouse an' everything snug, and while 'e works 'e makes good money.

ANN. 'Twill not end, surely.

TOM. There was 'is father and two brothers all broken men by it.

[_She hears Mary on the stairs, and they are silent._]

ANN. 'Ere's yer pretty dress, Mary.

MARY. Ay.... Thankye, Tom.

TOM. 'Twill be lovely for ye, my dear, an' grand. 'Tis a fine day fur yer weddin', my dear....

MARY. I'll be sorry to go, Tom.

TOM. An' sorry we'll be to lose ye....

MARY. I'll put the dress on.

[_She throws the frock over her arm and goes out with it._]

ANN. Another girl would 'a' wedded him years ago in the first foolishness of it. But Mary, for all she says so little, 'as long, long thoughts that never comes to the likes o' you and me.... Another girl, when the day 'ad come at last, would 'a' been wild wi' the joy an' the fear o' it.... But Mary, she's sat on the fells under the stars, an' windin' among the sheep. D' ye mind the nights she's been out like an old shepherd wi' t' sheep? D' ye mind the nights when she was but a lile 'un an' we found 'er out in the dawn sleepin' snug again the side o' a fat ewe?

TOM. 'Tis not like a weddin' day for 'er.... If she'd 'ad a new dress, now--

ANN. I said to 'er would she like a new dress; but she would have only the old 'un cut an' shaped to be in the fashion.... Et 'as been a strange coortin', an' 'twill be a strange life for 'em both, I'm thinkin', for there seems no gladness in 'er, nor never was, for she never was foolish an' she never was young; but she was always like there was a great weight on 'er, so as she must be about the world alone, but always she 'ave turned to the little things an' the weak, an' always she 'ad some poor sick beast for tendin' or another woman's babe to 'old to 'er breast, an' I think sometimes that 'tis only because Bill is a poor sick beast wi' a poor sick soul that she be so set on 'im.

TOM. 'E be a sodden beast wi' never a soul to be saved or damned--

ANN. 'Cept for the drink, 'e've been a good son to 'is old mother when the others 'ud 'a left 'er to rot i' the ditch, an' 'e was the on'y one as 'ud raise a finger again his father when the owd man, God rest him, was on to 'er like a madman. Drunk or sober 'e always was on 'is mother's side.

TOM. 'Twas a fearful 'ouse that.

ANN. 'Twas wonderful that for all they did to 'er, that wild old man wi' 'is wild young sons, she outlived 'em all, but never a one could she save from the curse that was on them, an', sober, they was the likeliest men 'n Troutbeck....

TOM. 'Tis when the rain comes and t' clouds come low an' black on the fells and the cold damp eats into a man's bones that the fearful thoughts come to 'im that must be drowned or 'im go mad--an' only the foreigners like me or them as 'as foreign blood new in 'em can 'old out again it; 'tis the curse o' livin' too long between two lines o' 'ills.

ANN. An' what that owd woman could never do, d'ye think our Mary'll do it? 'Im a Troutbeck man an' she a Troutbeck girl?

TOM. She've 'eld to 'er bargain an' brought 'im to it.

ANN. There's things that a maid can do that a wife cannot an' that's truth, an' shame it is to the men. [_ Comes a knock at the door. _]
'Tisn't time for t' weddin' folk.

[_ Tom goes to the window. _]

TOM. Gorm. 'Tis Mrs. Airey.

ANN. T' owd woman. She that 'as not been further than 'er garden-gate these ten years?

[_ She goes to the door, opens it to admit Mrs. Airey, an old gaunt woman just beginning to be bent with age. _]

MRS. A. Good day to you, Tom Davis.

TOM. Good day to you, Mrs. Airey.

MRS. A. Good day to you, Ann Davis.

ANN. Good day to you, Mrs. Airey. Will ye sit down?

[_She dusts a chair and Mrs. Airey sits by the fireside. She sits silent for a long while. Tom and Ann look uneasily at her and at each other._]

MRS. A. So 'tis all ready for Bill's wedding.

TOM. Ay. 'Tis a fine day, an' the folks bid, and the sharry-bang got for to drive to Coniston, all the party of us. Will ye be coming, Mrs. Airey?

MRS. A. I'll not. [_Mrs. Airey sits silent again for long._] Is Mary in the 'ouse?

ANN. She be upstairs puttin' on 'er weddin' dress.

MRS. A. 'Tis the sad day of 'er life.... They're a rotten lot an' who should know et better than me? Bill's the best of 'em, but Bill's rotten.... Six months is not enough, nor six years nor sixty, not while 'er stays in Troutbeck rememberin' all that 'as been an' all the trouble that was in the 'ouse along o' it, and so I've come for to say it.

ANN. She growed up lovin' Bill, and 'tis a set thing. She've waited long years. 'Tis done now, an' what they make for themselves they make, an' 'tis not for us to go speirin' for the trouble they may make for themselves, but only to pray that it may pass them by....

MRS. A. But 'tis certain.... Six months is not enough, nor six years, nor sixty--

ANN. And are ye come for to tell Mary this...?

MRS. A. This and much more....

TOM. And what 'ave ye said to Bill?

MRS. A. Nowt. There never was a son would give 'eed to 'is mother.... 'Tisn't for 'im I'm thinkin', but for t' children that she's bear 'im. I 'oped, and went on 'opin' till there was no 'ope left in me, and I lived to curse the day that each one of my sons was born. John and Peter are dead an' left no child behind, and it were better for Bill also to leave no child behind. There's a day and 'alf a day o' peace and content for a woman with such a man, and there's long, long years of thinkin' on the peace and content that's gone. There's long, long years of watching the child that you've borne and suckled turn rotten, an' I say that t' birth-pangs are nowt to t' pangs that ye 'ave from the childer of such a man as Bill or Bill's father.... She's a strong girl an' a good girl; but there's this that is stronger than 'er.

[_Mary comes again, very pretty in her blue dress. She is at once

sensible of the strangeness in Tom and Ann. She stands looking from one to the other. Mrs. Airey sits gazing into the fire._]

MARY. Why, mother ... 'tis kind of you to come on this morning.

MRS. A. Ay, 'tis kind of me. [_Ann steals away upstairs and Tom, taking the lead from her, goes out into the road._] Come 'ere, my pretty.

[_Mary goes and stands by her._]

MARY. The sun is shining and the bees all out and busy to gather in the honey.

MRS. A. 'Tis the bees as is t' wise people to work away in t' dark when t' sun is hidden, and to work away in t' sun when 'tis bright and light. 'Tis the bees as is t' wise people that takes their men an' kills 'em for the 'arm that they may do, and it's us that's the foolish ones to make soft the way of our men an' let them strut before us and lie; and 'tis us that's the foolish ones ever to give a thought to their needs that give never a one to ours.

MARY. 'Tis us that's t' glorious ones to 'elp them that is so weak, and 'tis us that's the brave and the kind ones to let them 'ave the 'ole world to play with when they will give never a thought to us that gives it t' 'em.

MRS. A. My pretty, my pretty, there's never a one of us can 'elp a man that thinks 'isself a man an' strong, poor fool, an' there's never a one of us can 'elp a man that's got a curse on 'im and is rotten through to t' bone, an' not one day can you be a 'elp to such a man as this....

MARY. There's not one day that I will not try, and not one day that I will not fight to win 'im back....

MRS. A. The life of a woman is a sorrowful thing....

MARY. For all its sorrow, 'tis a greater thing than t' life of a man ... an' so I'll live it....

MRS. A. Now you're strong and you're young.--'Ope's with ye still and life all before ye--and so I thought when my day came, and so I did. There was a day and 'alf a day of peace and content, and there was long, long years of thinking on the peace and content that are gone.... Four men all gone the same road, and me left looking down the way that they are gone and seeing it all black as the pit.... I be a poor old woman now with never a creature to come near me in kindness, an' I was such a poor old woman before ever the 'alf of life was gone, an' so you'll be if you take my son for your man. He's the best of my sons, but I curse the day that ever he was born....

MARY. There was never a man the like of Bill. If ye see 'un striding the 'ill, ye know 'tis a man by 'is strong, long stride; and if ye see 'un leapin' an' screein' down th' 'ill, ye know 'tis a man; and if we see 'un in t' quarry, ye know 'tis a strong man....

MRS. A. An' if ye see 'un lyin' drunk i' the ditch, not roarin' drunk, but rotten drunk, wi' 'is face fouled an' 'is clothes mucked, ye know 'tis the lowest creature of the world.

[_Mary stands staring straight in front of her._]

MARY. Is it for this that ye come to me to-day?

MRS. A. Ay, for this: that ye may send 'un back to 'is rottenness, for back to it 'e'll surely go when 'tis too late, an' you a poor old woman like me, with never a creature to come near ye in kindness, before ever the bloom 'as gone from your bonny cheeks, an' maybe childer that'll grow up bonny an' then be blighted for all the tenderness ye give to them; an' those days will be the worst of all--far worse than the day when ye turn for good an' all into yourself from t' man that will give ye nowt.... 'Tis truly the bees as is the wise people....

MARY. It's a weary waitin' that I've had, and better the day and 'alf a day of peace and content with all the long years of thinking on it than all the long, long years of my life to go on waitin' and waitin' for what has passed me by, for if he be the rottenest, meanest man in t' world that ever was made, there is no other that I can see or ever will. It is no wild foolishness that I am doing: I never was like that; but it's a thing that's growed wi' me an' is a part o' me--an' though every day o' my life were set before me now so I could see to the very end, an' every day sadder and blacker than the last, I'd not turn back. I gave 'im the bargain, years back now, and three times e' 'as failed me; but 'e sets store by me enough to do this for me a fourth time--'Twas kind of ye to come....

MRS. A. You're strong an' you're young, but there's this that's stronger than yourself--

MARY. Maybe, but 'twill not be for want o' fightin' wi' 't.

MRS. A. 'Twill steal on ye when you're weakest, an' come on ye in your greatest need....

MARY. It 'as come to this day an' there is no goin' back. D' ye think I've not seed t' soft, gentle things that are given to other women, an' not envied them? D' ye think I've not seed 'em walkin' shut-eyed into all sorts o' foolishness an' never askin' for the trewth o' it, an' not envied 'em for doin' that? D' ye think I've not seed the girls I growed

wi' matin' lightly an' lightly weddin', an' not envied 'em for that, they wi' a 'ouse an' babes an' me drudgin' away in t' farm, me wi' my man to 'and an' only this agin 'im? D' ye think I've not been tore in two wi' wantin' to close my eyes an' walk like others into it an' never think what is to come? There's many an' many a night that I've sat there under t' stars wi' t' three counties afore me an' t' sea, an' t' sheep croppin', an' my own thoughts for all the comp'ny that I 'ad, an' fightin' this way an' that for to take 'up an' let 'un be so rotten, as ever 'e might be; an' there's many an' many a night when the thoughts come so fast that they hurt me an' I lay pressed close to t' ground wi' me 'ands clawin' at it an' me teeth bitin' into t' ground for to get closer an' 'ide from myself; an' many a night when I sat there seein' the man as t' brave lad 'e was when I seed 'un first leapin' down the 'ill, an' knowin' that nothin' in the world, nothin' that I could do to 'un or that 'e could do 'isself, would ever take that fro' me.... In all my time o' my weary waitin' there 'as never been a soul that I told so much to, an' God knows there never 'as been an' never will be a time when I can tell as much to 'im....

MRS. A. My pretty, my pretty, 'tis a waste an' a wicked, wicked waste....

MARY. 'Tis a day an' alf a day agin never a moment....

MRS. A. 'Tis that, and so 'tis wi' all o' us ... an' so 'twill be....
God bless ye, my dear....

[_Ann comes down. Mary is looking out of the window._]

ANN. Ye forgot the ribbon for yer 'air, that I fetched 'specially fro' t' town.

MARY. Why, yes. Will ye tie it, Ann?

[_Ann ties the ribbon in her hair._]

MRS. A. Pretty, my dear, oh! pretty--

MARY. I'm to walk to t' church o' Tom's arm...?

ANN. An' I to Tom's left; wi' the bridesmaids be'ind, an' the rest a followin'....

[_Tom returns, followed by two girls bringing armfuls of flowers. With these they deck the room, and keep the choicest blooms for Mary. Ann and the three girls are busied with making Mary reach her most beautiful. Mrs. Airey goes. At intervals one villager and another comes to give greeting or to bring some small offering of food or some small article of clothing. Mary thanks them all with

rare natural grace. They call her fine, and ejaculate remarks of admiration: "The purty bride...." "She's beautiful...." "'Tis a lucky lad, Bill Airey...." The church bell begins to ring.... All is prepared and all are ready.... Mary is given her gloves, which she draws on--when the door is thrown open and Bill Airey lunges against the lintel of the door and stands leering. He is just sober enough to know what he is at. He is near tears, poor wretch. He is not horribly drunk. He stands surveying the group and they him._]

BILL. I come--I come--I--c-come for to--to--to--show--to show myself....

[_He turns in utter misery and goes. Mary plucks the flowers from her bosom and lets them fall to the ground; draws her gloves off her hands and lets them fall. The bell continues to ring._]

[_Curtain._]

from: The Project Gutenberg EBook of Fifty Contemporary One-Act Plays, by Various

THE RIDE BY NIGHT.

Mr. Adam Baines is a little Gray about the temples, but still looks so young that few could suppose him to have served in the Civil War. Indeed, he was in the army less than a year. How he went out of it he told me in some such words as these:--

An orderly from the direction of Meade's headquarters galloped into our parade ground, and straight for the man on guard before the colonel's tent. That was pretty late in the afternoon of a bright March day in 1865, but the parade ground was all red mud with shallow pools. I remember well how the hind hoofs of the orderly's galloper threw away great chunks of earth as he splashed diagonally across the open.

His rider never slowed till he brought his horse to its haunches before the sentry. There he flung himself off instantly, caught up his sabre, and ran through the middle opening of the high screen of sapling pines stuck on end, side by side, all around the acre or so occupied by the officers' quarters.

The day, though sunny, was not warm, and nearly all the men of my regiment were in their huts when that galloping was heard. Then they hurried out like bees from rows of hives, ran up the lanes between the lines of huts, and collected, each company separately, on the edge of the parade ground opposite the officers' quarters.

You see we had a notion that the orderly had brought the word to break camp. For five months the Army of the Potomac had been in winter quarters, and for weeks nothing more exciting than vidette duty had broken the monotony of our brigade. We understood that Sheridan had received command of all Grant's cavalry, but did not know but the orderly had rushed from Sheridan himself. Yet we awaited the man's re-appearance with intense curiosity.

Soon, instead of the orderly, out ran our first lieutenant, a small, wiry, long-haired man named Miller. He was in undress uniform,--just a blouse and trousers,--and bare-headed. Though he wore low shoes, he dashed through mud and water toward us, plainly in a great hurry.

"Sergeant Kennedy, I want ten men at once--mounted," Miller said. "Choose the ten best able for a long ride, and give them the best horses in the company. You understand,--no matter whose the ten best horses are, give 'em to the ten best riders."

"I understand, sir," said Kennedy.

By this time half the company had started for the stables, for fully half considered themselves among the best riders. The lieutenant laughed at their eagerness.

"Halt, boys!" he cried. "Sergeant, I'll pick out four myself. Come yourself, and bring Corporal Crowfoot, Private Bader, and Private Absalom Gray."

Crowfoot, Bader, and Gray had been running for the stables with the rest. Now these three old soldiers grinned and walked, as much as to say, "We needn't hurry; we're picked anyhow;" while the others hurried on. I remained near Kennedy, for I was so young and green a soldier that I supposed I had no chance to go.

"Hurry up! parade as soon as possible. One day's rations; light marching order--no blankets--fetch over-coats and ponchos," said Miller, turning; "and in choosing your men, favor light weights."

That was, no doubt, the remark which brought me in. I was lanky, light, bred among horses, and one of the best in the regiment had fallen to my lot. Kennedy wheeled, and his eye fell on me.

"Saddle up, Adam, boy," said he; "I guess you'll do."

Lieutenant Miller ran back to his quarters, his long hair flying wide. When he reappeared fifteen minutes later, we were trotting across the parade ground to meet him. He was mounted, not on his own charger, but on the colonel's famous thorough-bred bay. Then we knew a hard ride must be in prospect.

"What! one of the boys?" cried Miller, as he saw me. "He's too young."

"He's very light, sir; tough as hickory. I guess he'll do," said Kennedy.

"Well, no time to change now. Follow me! But, hang it, you've got your carbines! Oh, I forgot! Keep pistols only! throw down your sabres and carbines--anywhere--never mind the mud!"

As we still hesitated to throw down our clean guns, he shouted: "Down with them--anywhere! Now, boys, after me, by twos! Trot--gallop!"

Away we went, not a man jack of us knew for where or what. The colonel and officers, standing grouped before regimental headquarters, volleyed a cheer at us. It was taken up by the whole regiment; it was taken up by the brigade; it was repeated by regiment after regiment of infantry as we galloped through the great camp toward the left front of the army. The speed at which Miller led over a rough corduroy road

was extraordinary, and all the men suspected some desperate enterprise afoot.

Red and brazen was the set of the sun. I remember it well, after we got clear of the forts, clear of the breastworks, clear of the reserves, down the long slope and across the wide ford of Grimthorpe's Creek, never drawing rein.

The lieutenant led by ten yards or so. He had ordered each two to take as much distance from the other two in advance; but we rode so fast that the water from the heels of his horse and from the heels of each two splashed into the faces of the following men.

From the ford we loped up a hill, and passed the most advanced infantry pickets, who laughed and chaffed us, asking us for locks of our hair, and if our mothers knew we were out, and promising to report our last words faithfully to the folks at home.

Soon we turned to the left again, swept close by several cavalry videttes, and knew then that we were bound for a ride through a country that might or might not be within Lee's outer lines, at that time extended so thinly in many places that his pickets were far out of touch with one another. To this day I do not know precisely where we went, nor precisely what for. Soldiers are seldom informed of the meaning of their movements.

What I do know is what we did while I was in the ride. As we were approaching dense pine woods the lieutenant turned in his saddle, slacked pace a little, and shouted, "Boys, bunch up near me!"

He screwed round in his saddle so far that we could all see and hear, and said:--

"Boys, the order is to follow this road as fast as we can till our horses drop, or else the Johnnies drop us, or else we drop upon three brigades of our own infantry. I guess they've got astray somehow; but I don't know myself what the trouble is. Our orders are plain. The brigades are supposed to be somewhere on this road. I guess we shall do a big thing if we reach those men to-night. All we've got to do is to ride and deliver this despatch to the general in command. You all understand?"

"Yes, sir! Yes, sir! Yes, sir!"

"It's necessary you all should. Hark, now! We are not likely to strike the enemy in force, but we are likely to run up against small parties. Now, Kennedy, if they down me, you are to stop just long enough to grab the despatch from my breast; then away you go,--always on the main road. If they down you after you've got the paper, the man who

can grab it first is to take it and hurry forward. So on right to the last man. If they down him, and he's got his senses when he falls, he's to tear the paper up, and scatter it as widely as he can. You all understand?"

"Yes, sir! Yes, sir!"

"All right, then. String out again!"

He touched the big bay with the spur, and shot quickly ahead.

With the long rest of the winter our horses were in prime spirits, though mostly a little too fleshy for perfect condition. I had cared well for my horse; he was fast and sound in wind and limb. I was certainly the lightest rider of the eleven.

I was still thinking of the probability that I should get further on the way than any comrade except the lieutenant, or perhaps Crowfoot and Bader, whose horses were in great shape; I was thinking myself likely to win promotion before morning, when a cry came out of the darkness ahead. The words of the challenge I was not able to catch, but I heard Miller shout, "Forward, boys!"

We shook out more speed just as a rifle spat its long flash at us from about a hundred yards ahead. For one moment I plainly saw the Southerner's figure. Kennedy reeled beside me, flung up his hands with a scream, and fell. His horse stopped at once. In a moment the lieutenant had ridden the sentry down.

Then from the right side of the road a party, who must have been lying round the camp-fire that we faintly saw in among the pines, let fly at us. They had surely been surprised in their sleep. I clearly saw them as their guns flashed.

"Forward! Don't shoot! Ride on," shouted Miller. "Bushwhackers! Thank God, not mounted! Any of you make out horses with them?"

"No, sir! No, sir!"

"Who yelled? who went down?"

"Kennedy, sir," I cried.

"Too bad! Any one else?"

"No, sir."

"All safe?"

"I'm touched in my right arm; but it's nothing," I said. The twinge was slight, and in the fleshy place in front of my shoulder. I could not make out that I was losing blood, and the pain from the hurt was scarcely perceptible.

"Good boy! Keep up, Adam!" called the lieutenant with a kind tone. I remember my delight that he spoke my front name. On we flew.

Possibly the shots had been heard by the party half a mile further on, for they greeted us with a volley. A horse coughed hard and pitched down behind me. His rider yelled as he fell. Then two more shots came: Crowfoot reeled in front of me, and somehow checked his horse. I saw him no more. Next moment we were upon the group with our pistols.

"Forward, men! Don't stop to fight!" roared Miller, as he got clear. A rifle was fired so close to my head that the flame burned my back hair, and my ears rang for half an hour or more. My bay leaped high and dashed down a man. In a few seconds I was fairly out of the scrimmage.

How many of my comrades had gone down I knew not, nor beside whom I was riding. Suddenly our horses plunged into a hole; his stumbled, the man pitched forward, and was left behind. Then I heard a shot, the clatter of another falling horse, the angry yell of another thrown rider.

On we went,--the relics of us. Now we rushed out of the pine forest into broad moonlight, and I saw two riders between me and the lieutenant,--one man almost at my shoulder and another galloping ten yards behind. Very gradually this man dropped to the rear. We had lost five men already, and still the night was young.

Bader and Absalom Gray were nearest me. Neither spoke a word till we struck upon a space of sandy road. Then I could hear, far behind the rear man, a sound of galloping on the hard highway.

"They're after us, lieutenant!" shouted Bader.

"Many?" He slacked speed, and we listened attentively.

"Only one," cried Miller. "He's coming fast."

The pursuer gained so rapidly that we looked to our pistols again. Then Absalom Gray cried:

"It's only a horse!"

In a few moments the great gray of fallen Corporal Crowfoot overtook us, went ahead, and slacked speed by the lieutenant.

"Good! He'll be fresh when the rest go down!" shouted Miller. "Let the last man mount the gray!"

By this time we had begun to think ourselves clear of the enemy, and doomed to race on till the horses should fall.

Suddenly the hoofs of Crowfoot's gray and the lieutenant's bay thundered upon a plank road whose hollow noise, when we all reached it, should have been heard far. It took us through wide orchard lands into a low-lying mist by the banks of a great marsh, till we passed through that fog, strode heavily up a slope, and saw the shimmer of roofs under the moon. Straight, through the main street we pounded along.

Whether it was wholly deserted I know not, but not a human being was in the streets, nor any face visible at the black windows. Not even a dog barked. I noticed no living thing except some turkeys roosting on a fence, and a white cat that sprang upon the pillar of a gateway and thence to a tree.

Some of the houses seemed to have been ruined by a cannonade. I suppose it was one of the places almost destroyed in Willoughby's recent raid. Here we thundered, expecting ambush and conflict every moment, while the loneliness of the street imposed on me such a sense as might come of galloping through a long cemetery of the dead.

Out of the village we went off the planks again upon sand. I began to suspect that I was losing a good deal of blood. My brain was on fire with whirling thoughts and wonder where all was to end. Out of this daze I came, in amazement to find that we were quickly overtaking our lieutenant's thoroughbred.

Had he been hit in the fray, and bled to weakness? I only know that, still galloping while we gained, the famous horse lurched forward, almost turned a somersault, and fell on his rider.

"Stop--the paper!" shouted Bader.

We drew rein, turned, dismounted, and found Miller's left leg under the big bay's shoulder. The horse was quite dead, the rider's long hair lay on the sand, his face was white under the moon!

We stopped long enough to extricate him, and he came to his senses just as we made out that his left leg was broken.

"Forward!" he groaned. "What in thunder are you stopped for? Oh, the despatch! Here! away you go! Good-bye."

In attending to Miller we had forgotten the rider who had been long gradually dropping behind. Now as we galloped away,--Bader, Absalom Gray, myself, and Crowfoot's riderless horse,--I looked behind for that comrade; but he was not to be seen or heard. We three were left of the eleven.

From the loss of so many comrades the importance of our mission seemed huge. With the speed, the noise, the deaths, the strangeness of the gallop through that forsaken village, the wonder how all would end, the increasing belief that thousands of lives depended on our success, and the longing to win, my brain was wild. A raging desire to be first held me, and I galloped as if in a dream.

Bader led; the riderless gray thundered beside him; Absalom rode stirrup to stirrup with me. He was a veteran of the whole war. Where it was that his sorrel rolled over I do not remember at all, though I perfectly remember how Absalom sprang up, staggered, shouted, "My foot is sprained!" and fell as I turned to look at him and went racing on.

Then I heard above the sound of our hoofs the voice of the veteran of the war. Down as he was, his spirit was unbroken. In the favorite song of the army his voice rose clear and gay and piercing:--

"Hurrah for the Union!
Hurrah, boys, hurrah!
Shouting the battle-cry of freedom!"

We turned our heads and cheered him as we flew, for there was something indescribably inspiriting in the gallant and cheerful lilt of the fallen man. It was as if he flung us, from the grief of utter defeat, a soul unconquerable; and I felt the life in me strengthened by the tone.

Old Bader and I for it! He led by a hundred yards, and Crowfoot's gray kept his stride. Was I gaining on them? How was it that I could see his figure outlined more clearly against the horizon? Surely dawn was not coming on!

No; I looked round on a world of naked peach-orchards, and corn-fields ragged with last year's stalks, all dimly lit by a moon that showed far from midnight; and that faint light on the horizon was not in the east, but in the west. The truth flashed on me,--I was looking at such an illumination of the sky as would be caused by the camp-fires of an army.

"The missing brigade!" I shouted.

"Or a Southern division!" Bader cried. "Come on!"

"Come on!" I was certainly gaining on him, but very slowly. Before the nose of my bay was beyond the tail of his roan, the wide illuminations had become more distinct; and still not a vidette, not a picket, not a sound of the proximity of an army.

Bader and I now rode side by side, and Crowfoot's gray easily kept the pace. My horse was in plain distress, but Bader's was nearly done.

"Take the paper, Adam," he said; "my roan won't go much further. Good-bye, youngster. Away you go!" and I drew now quickly ahead.

Still Bader rode on behind me. In a few minutes he was considerably behind. Perhaps the sense of being alone increased my feeling of weakness. Was I going to reel out of the saddle? Had I lost so much blood as that? Still I could hear Bader riding on. I turned to look at him. Already he was scarcely visible. Soon he dropped out of sight; but still I heard the laborious pounding of his desperate horse.

My bay was gasping horribly. How far was that faintly yellow sky ahead? It might be two, it might be five miles. Were Union or Southern soldiers beneath it? Could it be conceived that no troops of the enemy were between me and it?

Never mind; my orders were clear. I rode straight on, and I was still riding straight on, marking no increase in the distress of my bay, when he stopped as if shot, staggered, fell on his knees, tried to rise, rolled to his side, groaned and lay.

I was so weak I could not clear myself. I remember my right spur catching in my saddle-cloth as I tried to free my foot; then I pitched forward and fell. Not yet senseless, I clutched at my breast for the despatch, meaning to tear it to pieces; but there my brain failed, and in full view of the goal of the night I lay unconscious.

When I came to, I rose on my left elbow, and looked around. Near my feet my poor bay lay, stone dead. Crowfoot's gray!--where was Crowfoot's gray? It flashed on me that I might mount the fresh horse and ride on. But where was the gray? As I peered round I heard faintly the sound of a galloper. Was he coming my way? No; faintly and more faintly I heard the hoofs.

Had the gray gone on then, without the despatch? I clutched at my breast. My coat was unbuttoned--the paper was gone!

Well, sir, I cheered. My God! but it was comforting to hear those far-away hoofs, and know that Bader must have come up, taken the papers, and mounted Crowfoot's gray, still good for a ten-mile ride! The despatch was gone forward; we had not all fallen in vain; maybe

the brigades would be saved!

How purely the stars shone! When I stifled my groaning they seemed to tell me of a great peace to come. How still was the night! and I thought of the silence of the multitudes who had died for the Union.

Now the galloping had quite died away. There was not a sound,--a slight breeze blew, but there were no leaves to rustle. I put my head down on the neck of my dead horse. Extreme fatigue was benumbing the pain of my now swelling arm; perhaps sleep was near, perhaps I was swooning.

But a sound came that somewhat revived me. Far, low, joyful, it crept on the air. I sat up, wide awake. The sound, at first faint, died as the little breeze fell, then grew in the lull, and came ever more clearly as the wind arose. It was a sound never to be forgotten,--the sound of the distant cheering of thousands of men.

Then I knew that Bader had galloped into the Union lines, delivered the despatch, and told a story which had quickly passed through wakeful brigades.

Bader I never saw again, nor Lieutenant Miller, nor any man with whom I rode that night. When I came to my senses I was in hospital at City Point. Thence I went home invalided. No surgeon, no nurse, no soldier at the hospital could tell me of my regiment, or how or why I was where I was. All they could tell me was that Richmond was taken, the army far away in pursuit of Lee, and a rumor flying that the great commander of the South had surrendered near Appomattox Court House.

From: The Project Gutenberg EBook of Old Man Savarin and Other Stories, by Edward William Thomson

ALL GOLD CANYON

It was the green heart of the canyon, where the walls swerved back from the rigid plan and relieved their harshness of line by making a little sheltered nook and filling it to the brim with sweetness and roundness and softness. Here all things rested. Even the narrow stream ceased its turbulent down-rush long enough to form a quiet pool. Knee-deep in the water, with drooping head and half-shut eyes, drowsed a red-coated, many-antlered buck.

On one side, beginning at the very lip of the pool, was a tiny meadow, a cool, resilient surface of green that extended to the base of the frowning wall. Beyond the pool a gentle slope of earth ran up and up to meet the opposing wall. Fine grass covered the slope--grass that was spangled with flowers, with here and there patches of color, orange and purple and golden. Below, the canyon was shut in. There was no view. The walls leaned together abruptly and the canyon ended in a chaos of rocks, moss-covered and hidden by a green screen of vines and creepers and boughs of trees. Up the canyon rose far hills and peaks, the big foothills, pine-covered and remote. And far beyond, like clouds upon the border of the sky, towered minarets of white, where the Sierra's eternal snows flashed austere the blazes of the sun.

There was no dust in the canyon. The leaves and flowers were clean and virginal. The grass was young velvet. Over the pool three cottonwoods sent their scurvy fluffs fluttering down the quiet air. On the slope the blossoms of the wine-wooded manzanita filled the air with springtime odors, while the leaves, wise with experience, were already beginning their vertical twist against the coming aridity of summer. In the open spaces on the slope, beyond the farthest shadow-reach of the manzanita, poised the mariposa lilies, like so many flights of jewelled moths suddenly arrested and on the verge of trembling into flight again. Here and there that woods harlequin, the madrone, permitting itself to be caught in the act of changing its pea-green trunk to madder-red, breathed its fragrance into the air from great clusters of waxen bells. Creamy white were these bells, shaped like lilies-of-the-valley, with the sweetness of perfume that is of the springtime.

There was not a sigh of wind. The air was drowsy with its weight of perfume. It was a sweetness that would have been cloying had the air been heavy and humid. But the air was sharp and thin. It was as starlight transmuted into atmosphere, shot through and warmed by sunshine, and flower-drenched with sweetness.

An occasional butterfly drifted in and out through the patches of light and shade. And from all about rose the low and sleepy hum of mountain

bees--feasting Sybarites that jostled one another good-naturedly at the board, nor found time for rough discourtesy. So quietly did the little stream drip and ripple its way through the canyon that it spoke only in faint and occasional gurgles. The voice of the stream was as a drowsy whisper, ever interrupted by dozings and silences, ever lifted again in the awakenings.

The motion of all things was a drifting in the heart of the canyon. Sunshine and butterflies drifted in and out among the trees. The hum of the bees and the whisper of the stream were a drifting of sound. And the drifting sound and drifting color seemed to weave together in the making of a delicate and intangible fabric which was the spirit of the place. It was a spirit of peace that was not of death, but of smooth-pulsing life, of quietude that was not silence, of movement that was not action, of repose that was quick with existence without being violent with struggle and travail. The spirit of the place was the spirit of the peace of the living, somnolent with the easement and content of prosperity, and undisturbed by rumors of far wars.

The red-coated, many-antlered buck acknowledged the lordship of the spirit of the place and dozed knee-deep in the cool, shaded pool. There seemed no flies to vex him and he was languid with rest. Sometimes his ears moved when the stream awoke and whispered; but they moved lazily, with, foreknowledge that it was merely the stream grown garrulous at discovery that it had slept.

But there came a time when the buck's ears lifted and tensed with swift eagerness for sound. His head was turned down the canyon. His sensitive, quivering nostrils scented the air. His eyes could not pierce the green screen through which the stream rippled away, but to his ears came the voice of a man. It was a steady, monotonous, singsong voice. Once the buck heard the harsh clash of metal upon rock. At the sound he snorted with a sudden start that jerked him through the air from water to meadow, and his feet sank into the young velvet, while he pricked his ears and again scented the air. Then he stole across the tiny meadow, pausing once and again to listen, and faded away out of the canyon like a wraith, soft-footed and without sound.

The clash of steel-shod soles against the rocks began to be heard, and the man's voice grew louder. It was raised in a sort of chant and became distinct with nearness, so that the words could be heard:

"Turn around an' tu'n yo' face
Untoe them sweet hills of grace
(D' pow'rs of sin yo' am scornin'!).
Look about an' look aroun',
Fling yo' sin-pack on d' groun'
(Yo' will meet wid d' Lord in d' mornin'!)."

A sound of scrambling accompanied the song, and the spirit of the place fled away on the heels of the red-coated buck. The green screen was burst asunder, and a man peered out at the meadow and the pool and the sloping side-hill. He was a deliberate sort of man. He took in the scene with one embracing glance, then ran his eyes over the details to verify the general impression. Then, and not until then, did he open his mouth in vivid and solemn approval:

"Smoke of life an' snakes of purgatory! Will you just look at that! Wood an' water an' grass an' a side-hill! A pocket-hunter's delight an' a cayuse's paradise! Cool green for tired eyes! Pink pills for pale people ain't in it. A secret pasture for prospectors and a resting-place for tired burros, by damn!"

He was a sandy-complexioned man in whose face geniality and humor seemed the salient characteristics. It was a mobile face, quick-changing to inward mood and thought. Thinking was in him a visible process. Ideas chased across his face like wind-flaws across the surface of a lake. His hair, sparse and unkempt of growth, was as indeterminate and colorless as his complexion. It would seem that all the color of his frame had gone into his eyes, for they were startlingly blue. Also, they were laughing and merry eyes, within them much of the naivete and wonder of the child; and yet, in an unassertive way, they contained much of calm self-reliance and strength of purpose founded upon self-experience and experience of the world.

From out the screen of vines and creepers he flung ahead of him a miner's pick and shovel and gold-pan. Then he crawled out himself into the open. He was clad in faded overalls and black cotton shirt, with hobnailed brogans on his feet, and on his head a hat whose shapelessness and stains advertised the rough usage of wind and rain and sun and camp-smoke. He stood erect, seeing wide-eyed the secrecy of the scene and sensuously inhaling the warm, sweet breath of the canyon-garden through nostrils that dilated and quivered with delight. His eyes narrowed to laughing slits of blue, his face wreathed itself in joy, and his mouth curled in a smile as he cried aloud:

"Jumping dandelions and happy hollyhocks, but that smells good to me! Talk about your attar o' roses an' cologne factories! They ain't in it!"

He had the habit of soliloquy. His quick-changing facial expressions might tell every thought and mood, but the tongue, perforce, ran hard after, repeating, like a second Boswell.

The man lay down on the lip of the pool and drank long and deep of its water. "Tastes good to me," he murmured, lifting his head and gazing across the pool at the side-hill, while he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. The side-hill attracted his attention. Still lying on his stomach, he studied the hill formation long and carefully. It was a

practised eye that travelled up the slope to the crumbling canyon-wall and back and down again to the edge of the pool. He scrambled to his feet and favored the side-hill with a second survey.

"Looks good to me," he concluded, picking up his pick and shovel and gold-pan.

He crossed the stream below the pool, stepping agilely from stone to stone. Where the sidehill touched the water he dug up a shovelful of dirt and put it into the gold-pan. He squatted down, holding the pan in his two hands, and partly immersing it in the stream. Then he imparted to the pan a deft circular motion that sent the water sluicing in and out through the dirt and gravel. The larger and the lighter particles worked to the surface, and these, by a skilful dipping movement of the pan, he spilled out and over the edge. Occasionally, to expedite matters, he rested the pan and with his fingers raked out the large pebbles and pieces of rock.

The contents of the pan diminished rapidly until only fine dirt and the smallest bits of gravel remained. At this stage he began to work very deliberately and carefully. It was fine washing, and he washed fine and finer, with a keen scrutiny and delicate and fastidious touch. At last the pan seemed empty of everything but water; but with a quick semicircular flirt that sent the water flying over the shallow rim into the stream, he disclosed a layer of black sand on the bottom of the pan. So thin was this layer that it was like a streak of paint. He examined it closely. In the midst of it was a tiny golden speck. He dribbled a little water in over the depressed edge of the pan. With a quick flirt he sent the water sluicing across the bottom, turning the grains of black sand over and over. A second tiny golden speck rewarded his effort.

The washing had now become very fine--fine beyond all need of ordinary placer-mining. He worked the black sand, a small portion at a time, up the shallow rim of the pan. Each small portion he examined sharply, so that his eyes saw every grain of it before he allowed it to slide over the edge and away. Jealously, bit by bit, he let the black sand slip away. A golden speck, no larger than a pin-point, appeared on the rim, and by his manipulation of the riveter it returned to the bottom of the pan. And in such fashion another speck was disclosed, and another. Great was his care of them. Like a shepherd he herded his flock of golden specks so that not one should be lost. At last, of the pan of dirt nothing remained but his golden herd. He counted it, and then, after all his labor, sent it flying out of the pan with one final swirl of water.

But his blue eyes were shining with desire as he rose to his feet. "Seven," he muttered aloud, asserting the sum of the specks for which he had toiled so hard and which he had so wantonly thrown away. "Seven," he repeated, with the emphasis of one trying to impress a number on his

memory.

He stood still a long while, surveying the hill-side. In his eyes was a curiosity, new-aroused and burning. There was an exultance about his bearing and a keenness like that of a hunting animal catching the fresh scent of game.

He moved down the stream a few steps and took a second panful of dirt.

Again came the careful washing, the jealous herding of the golden specks, and the wantonness with which he sent them flying into the stream when he had counted their number.

"Five," he muttered, and repeated, "five."

He could not forbear another survey of the hill before filling the pan farther down the stream. His golden herds diminished. "Four, three, two, two, one," were his memory-tabulations as he moved down the stream. When but one speck of gold rewarded his washing, he stopped and built a fire of dry twigs. Into this he thrust the gold-pan and burned it till it was blue-black. He held up the pan and examined it critically. Then he nodded approbation. Against such a color-background he could defy the tiniest yellow speck to elude him.

Still moving down the stream, he panned again. A single speck was his reward. A third pan contained no gold at all. Not satisfied with this, he panned three times again, taking his shovels of dirt within a foot of one another. Each pan proved empty of gold, and the fact, instead of discouraging him, seemed to give him satisfaction. His elation increased with each barren washing, until he arose, exclaiming jubilantly:

"If it ain't the real thing, may God knock off my head with sour apples!"

Returning to where he had started operations, he began to pan up the stream. At first his golden herds increased--increased prodigiously. "Fourteen, eighteen, twenty-one, twenty-six," ran his memory tabulations. Just above the pool he struck his richest pan--thirty-five colors.

"Almost enough to save," he remarked regretfully as he allowed the water to sweep them away.

The sun climbed to the top of the sky. The man worked on. Pan by pan, he went up the stream, the tally of results steadily decreasing.

"It's just booful, the way it peters out," he exulted when a shovelful of dirt contained no more than a single speck of gold.

And when no specks at all were found in several pans, he straightened up and favored the hillside with a confident glance.

"Ah, ha! Mr. Pocket!" he cried out, as though to an auditor hidden somewhere above him beneath the surface of the slope. "Ah, ha! Mr. Pocket! I'm a-comin', I'm a-comin', an' I'm shorely gwine to get yer! You heah me, Mr. Pocket? I'm gwine to get yer as shore as punkins ain't cauliflowers!"

He turned and flung a measuring glance at the sun poised above him in the azure of the cloudless sky. Then he went down the canyon, following the line of shovel-holes he had made in filling the pans. He crossed the stream below the pool and disappeared through the green screen. There was little opportunity for the spirit of the place to return with its quietude and repose, for the man's voice, raised in ragtime song, still dominated the canyon with possession.

After a time, with a greater clashing of steel-shod feet on rock, he returned. The green screen was tremendously agitated. It surged back and forth in the throes of a struggle. There was a loud grating and clanging of metal. The man's voice leaped to a higher pitch and was sharp with imperativeness. A large body plunged and panted. There was a snapping and ripping and rending, and amid a shower of falling leaves a horse burst through the screen. On its back was a pack, and from this trailed broken vines and torn creepers. The animal gazed with astonished eyes at the scene into which it had been precipitated, then dropped its head to the grass and began contentedly to graze. A second horse scrambled into view, slipping once on the mossy rocks and regaining equilibrium when its hoofs sank into the yielding surface of the meadow. It was riderless, though on its back was a high-horned Mexican saddle, scarred and discolored by long usage.

The man brought up the rear. He threw off pack and saddle, with an eye to camp location, and gave the animals their freedom to graze. He unpacked his food and got out frying-pan and coffee-pot. He gathered an armful of dry wood, and with a few stones made a place for his fire.

"My!" he said, "but I've got an appetite. I could scoff iron-filings an' horseshoe nails an' thank you kindly, ma'am, for a second helpin'."

He straightened up, and, while he reached for matches in the pocket of his overalls, his eyes travelled across the pool to the side-hill. His fingers had clutched the match-box, but they relaxed their hold and the hand came out empty. The man wavered perceptibly. He looked at his preparations for cooking and he looked at the hill.

"Guess I'll take another whack at her," he concluded, starting to cross the stream.

"They ain't no sense in it, I know," he mumbled apologetically. "But keepin' grub back an hour ain't goin' to hurt none, I reckon."

A few feet back from his first line of test-pans he started a second line. The sun dropped down the western sky, the shadows lengthened, but the man worked on. He began a third line of test-pans. He was cross-cutting the hillside, line by line, as he ascended. The centre of each line produced the richest pans, while the ends came where no colors showed in the pan. And as he ascended the hillside the lines grew perceptibly shorter. The regularity with which their length diminished served to indicate that somewhere up the slope the last line would be so short as to have scarcely length at all, and that beyond could come only a point. The design was growing into an inverted "V." The converging sides of this "V" marked the boundaries of the gold-bearing dirt.

The apex of the "V" was evidently the man's goal. Often he ran his eye along the converging sides and on up the hill, trying to divine the apex, the point where the gold-bearing dirt must cease. Here resided "Mr. Pocket"--for so the man familiarly addressed the imaginary point above him on the slope, crying out:

"Come down out o' that, Mr. Pocket! Be right smart an' agreeable, an' come down!"

"All right," he would add later, in a voice resigned to determination. "All right, Mr. Pocket. It's plain to me I got to come right up an' snatch you out bald-headed. An' I'll do it! I'll do it!" he would threaten still later.

Each pan he carried down to the water to wash, and as he went higher up the hill the pans grew richer, until he began to save the gold in an empty baking-powder can which he carried carelessly in his hip-pocket. So engrossed was he in his toil that he did not notice the long twilight of oncoming night. It was not until he tried vainly to see the gold colors in the bottom of the pan that he realized the passage of time. He straightened up abruptly. An expression of whimsical wonderment and awe overspread his face as he drawled:

"Gosh darn my buttons! if I didn't plumb forget dinner!"

He stumbled across the stream in the darkness and lighted his long-delayed fire. Flapjacks and bacon and warmed-over beans constituted his supper. Then he smoked a pipe by the smouldering coals, listening to the night noises and watching the moonlight stream through the canyon. After that he unrolled his bed, took off his heavy shoes, and pulled the blankets up to his chin. His face showed white in the moonlight, like the face of a corpse. But it was a corpse that knew its resurrection, for the man rose suddenly on one elbow and gazed across at his hillside.

"Good night, Mr. Pocket," he called sleepily. "Good night."

He slept through the early gray of morning until the direct rays of the sun smote his closed eyelids, when he awoke with a start and looked about him until he had established the continuity of his existence and identified his present self with the days previously lived.

To dress, he had merely to buckle on his shoes. He glanced at his fireplace and at his hillside, wavered, but fought down the temptation and started the fire.

"Keep yer shirt on, Bill; keep yer shirt on," he admonished himself. "What's the good of rushin'? No use in gettin' all het up an' sweaty. Mr. Pocket'll wait for you. He ain't a-runnin' away before you can get yer breakfast. Now, what you want, Bill, is something fresh in yer bill o' fare. So it's up to you to go an' get it."

He cut a short pole at the water's edge and drew from one of his pockets a bit of line and a dragged fly that had once been a royal coachman.

"Mebbe they'll bite in the early morning," he muttered, as he made his first cast into the pool. And a moment later he was gleefully crying: "What'd I tell you, eh? What'd I tell you?"

He had no reel, nor any inclination to waste time, and by main strength, and swiftly, he drew out of the water a flashing ten-inch trout. Three more, caught in rapid succession, furnished his breakfast. When he came to the stepping-stones on his way to his hillside, he was struck by a sudden thought, and paused.

"I'd just better take a hike down-stream a ways," he said. "There's no tellin' what cuss may be snoopin' around."

But he crossed over on the stones, and with a "I really oughter take that hike," the need of the precaution passed out of his mind and he fell to work.

At nightfall he straightened up. The small of his back was stiff from stooping toil, and as he put his hand behind him to soothe the protesting muscles, he said:

"Now what d'ye think of that, by damn? I clean forgot my dinner again! If I don't watch out, I'll sure be degeneratin' into a two-meal-a-day crank."

"Pockets is the damnedest things I ever see for makin' a man absent-minded," he communed that night, as he crawled into his blankets. Nor did he forget to call up the hillside, "Good night, Mr. Pocket! Good night!"

Rising with the sun, and snatching a hasty breakfast, he was early at work. A fever seemed to be growing in him, nor did the increasing richness of the test-pans allay this fever. There was a flush in his cheek other than that made by the heat of the sun, and he was oblivious to fatigue and the passage of time. When he filled a pan with dirt, he ran down the hill to wash it; nor could he forbear running up the hill again, panting and stumbling profanely, to refill the pan.

He was now a hundred yards from the water, and the inverted "V" was assuming definite proportions. The width of the pay-dirt steadily decreased, and the man extended in his mind's eye the sides of the "V" to their meeting-place far up the hill. This was his goal, the apex of the "V," and he panned many times to locate it.

"Just about two yards above that manzanita bush an' a yard to the right," he finally concluded.

Then the temptation seized him. "As plain as the nose on your face," he said, as he abandoned his laborious cross-cutting and climbed to the indicated apex. He filled a pan and carried it down the hill to wash. It contained no trace of gold. He dug deep, and he dug shallow, filling and washing a dozen pans, and was unrewarded even by the tiniest golden speck. He was enraged at having yielded to the temptation, and cursed himself blasphemously and pridelessly. Then he went down the hill and took up the cross-cutting.

"Slow an' certain, Bill; slow an' certain," he crooned. "Short-cuts to fortune ain't in your line, an' it's about time you know it. Get wise, Bill; get wise. Slow an' certain's the only hand you can play; so go to it, an' keep to it, too."

As the cross-cuts decreased, showing that the sides of the "V" were converging, the depth of the "V" increased. The gold-trace was dipping into the hill. It was only at thirty inches beneath the surface that he could get colors in his pan. The dirt he found at twenty-five inches from the surface, and at thirty-five inches, yielded barren pans. At the base of the "V," by the water's edge, he had found the gold colors at the grass roots. The higher he went up the hill, the deeper the gold dipped.

To dig a hole three feet deep in order to get one test-pan was a task of no mean magnitude; while between the man and the apex intervened an untold number of such holes to be. "An' there's no tellin' how much deeper it'll pitch," he sighed, in a moment's pause, while his fingers soothed his aching back.

Feverish with desire, with aching back and stiffening muscles, with pick and shovel gouging and mauling the soft brown earth, the man toiled up

the hill. Before him was the smooth slope, spangled with flowers and made sweet with their breath. Behind him was devastation. It looked like some terrible eruption breaking out on the smooth skin of the hill. His slow progress was like that of a slug, befouling beauty with a monstrous trail.

Though the dipping gold-trace increased the man's work, he found consolation in the increasing richness of the pans. Twenty cents, thirty cents, fifty cents, sixty cents, were the values of the gold found in the pans, and at nightfall he washed his banner pan, which gave him a dollar's worth of gold-dust from a shovelful of dirt.

"I'll just bet it's my luck to have some inquisitive cuss come buttin' in here on my pasture," he mumbled sleepily that night as he pulled the blankets up to his chin.

Suddenly he sat upright. "Bill!" he called sharply. "Now, listen to me, Bill; d'ye hear! It's up to you, to-morrow mornin', to mosey round an' see what you can see. Understand? Tomorrow morning, an' don't you forget it!"

He yawned and glanced across at his side-hill. "Good night, Mr. Pocket," he called.

In the morning he stole a march on the sun, for he had finished breakfast when its first rays caught him, and he was climbing the wall of the canyon where it crumbled away and gave footing. From the outlook at the top he found himself in the midst of loneliness. As far as he could see, chain after chain of mountains heaved themselves into his vision. To the east his eyes, leaping the miles between range and range and between many ranges, brought up at last against the white-peaked Sierras--the main crest, where the backbone of the Western world reared itself against the sky. To the north and south he could see more distinctly the cross-systems that broke through the main trend of the sea of mountains. To the west the ranges fell away, one behind the other, diminishing and fading into the gentle foothills that, in turn, descended into the great valley which he could not see.

And in all that mighty sweep of earth he saw no sign of man nor of the handiwork of man--save only the torn bosom of the hillside at his feet. The man looked long and carefully. Once, far down his own canyon, he thought he saw in the air a faint hint of smoke. He looked again and decided that it was the purple haze of the hills made dark by a convolution of the canyon wall at its back.

"Hey, you, Mr. Pocket!" he called down into the canyon. "Stand out from under! I'm a-comin', Mr. Pocket! I'm a-comin'!"

The heavy brogans on the man's feet made him appear clumsy-footed, but

he swung down from the giddy height as lightly and airily as a mountain goat. A rock, turning under his foot on the edge of the precipice, did not disconcert him. He seemed to know the precise time required for the turn to culminate in disaster, and in the meantime he utilized the false footing itself for the momentary earth-contact necessary to carry him on into safety. Where the earth sloped so steeply that it was impossible to stand for a second upright, the man did not hesitate. His foot pressed the impossible surface for but a fraction of the fatal second and gave him the bound that carried him onward. Again, where even the fraction of a second's footing was out of the question, he would swing his body past by a moment's hand-grip on a jutting knob of rock, a crevice, or a precariously rooted shrub. At last, with a wild leap and yell, he exchanged the face of the wall for an earth-slide and finished the descent in the midst of several tons of sliding earth and gravel.

His first pan of the morning washed out over two dollars in coarse gold. It was from the centre of the "V." To either side the diminution in the values of the pans was swift. His lines of crosscutting holes were growing very short. The converging sides of the inverted "V" were only a few yards apart. Their meeting-point was only a few yards above him. But the pay-streak was dipping deeper and deeper into the earth. By early afternoon he was sinking the test-holes five feet before the pans could show the gold-trace.

For that matter, the gold-trace had become something more than a trace; it was a placer mine in itself, and the man resolved to come back after he had found the pocket and work over the ground. But the increasing richness of the pans began to worry him. By late afternoon the worth of the pans had grown to three and four dollars. The man scratched his head perplexedly and looked a few feet up the hill at the manzanita bush that marked approximately the apex of the "V." He nodded his head and said oracularly:

"It's one o' two things, Bill; one o' two things. Either Mr. Pocket's spilled himself all out an' down the hill, or else Mr. Pocket's that damned rich you maybe won't be able to carry him all away with you. And that'd be hell, wouldn't it, now?" He chuckled at contemplation of so pleasant a dilemma.

Nightfall found him by the edge of the stream his eyes wrestling with the gathering darkness over the washing of a five-dollar pan.

"Wisht I had an electric light to go on working," he said.

He found sleep difficult that night. Many times he composed himself and closed his eyes for slumber to overtake him; but his blood pounded with too strong desire, and as many times his eyes opened and he murmured wearily, "Wisht it was sun-up."

Sleep came to him in the end, but his eyes were open with the first paling of the stars, and the gray of dawn caught him with breakfast finished and climbing the hillside in the direction of the secret abiding-place of Mr. Pocket.

The first cross-cut the man made, there was space for only three holes, so narrow had become the pay-streak and so close was he to the fountainhead of the golden stream he had been following for four days.

"Be ca'm, Bill; be ca'm," he admonished himself, as he broke ground for the final hole where the sides of the "V" had at last come together in a point.

"I've got the almighty cinch on you, Mr. Pocket, an' you can't lose me," he said many times as he sank the hole deeper and deeper.

Four feet, five feet, six feet, he dug his way down into the earth. The digging grew harder. His pick grated on broken rock. He examined the rock. "Rotten quartz," was his conclusion as, with the shovel, he cleared the bottom of the hole of loose dirt. He attacked the crumbling quartz with the pick, bursting the disintegrating rock asunder with every stroke.

He thrust his shovel into the loose mass. His eye caught a gleam of yellow. He dropped the shovel and squatted suddenly on his heels. As a farmer rubs the clinging earth from fresh-dug potatoes, so the man, a piece of rotten quartz held in both hands, rubbed the dirt away.

"Sufferin' Sardanopolis!" he cried. "Lumps an' chunks of it! Lumps an' chunks of it!"

It was only half rock he held in his hand. The other half was virgin gold. He dropped it into his pan and examined another piece. Little yellow was to be seen, but with his strong fingers he crumbled the rotten quartz away till both hands were filled with glowing yellow. He rubbed the dirt away from fragment after fragment, tossing them into the gold-pan. It was a treasure-hole. So much had the quartz rotted away that there was less of it than there was of gold. Now and again he found a piece to which no rock clung--a piece that was all gold. A chunk, where the pick had laid open the heart of the gold, glittered like a handful of yellow jewels, and he cocked his head at it and slowly turned it around and over to observe the rich play of the light upon it.

"Talk about yer Too Much Gold diggin's!" the man snorted contemptuously. "Why, this diggin' 'd make it look like thirty cents. This diggin' is All Gold. An' right here an' now I name this yere canyon 'All Gold Canyon,' b' gosh!"

Still squatting on his heels, he continued examining the fragments and

tossing them into the pan. Suddenly there came to him a premonition of danger. It seemed a shadow had fallen upon him. But there was no shadow. His heart had given a great jump up into his throat and was choking him. Then his blood slowly chilled and he felt the sweat of his shirt cold against his flesh.

He did not spring up nor look around. He did not move. He was considering the nature of the premonition he had received, trying to locate the source of the mysterious force that had warned him, striving to sense the imperative presence of the unseen thing that threatened him. There is an aura of things hostile, made manifest by messengers refined for the senses to know; and this aura he felt, but knew not how he felt it. His was the feeling as when a cloud passes over the sun. It seemed that between him and life had passed something dark and smothering and menacing; a gloom, as it were, that swallowed up life and made for death--his death.

Every force of his being impelled him to spring up and confront the unseen danger, but his soul dominated the panic, and he remained squatting on his heels, in his hands a chunk of gold. He did not dare to look around, but he knew by now that there was something behind him and above him. He made believe to be interested in the gold in his hand. He examined it critically, turned it over and over, and rubbed the dirt from it. And all the time he knew that something behind him was looking at the gold over his shoulder.

Still feigning interest in the chunk of gold in his hand, he listened intently and he heard the breathing of the thing behind him. His eyes searched the ground in front of him for a weapon, but they saw only the uprooted gold, worthless to him now in his extremity. There was his pick, a handy weapon on occasion; but this was not such an occasion. The man realized his predicament. He was in a narrow hole that was seven feet deep. His head did not come to the surface of the ground. He was in a trap.

He remained squatting on his heels. He was quite cool and collected; but his mind, considering every factor, showed him only his helplessness. He continued rubbing the dirt from the quartz fragments and throwing the gold into the pan. There was nothing else for him to do. Yet he knew that he would have to rise up, sooner or later, and face the danger that breathed at his back.

The minutes passed, and with the passage of each minute he knew that by so much he was nearer the time when he must stand up, or else--and his wet shirt went cold against his flesh again at the thought--or else he might receive death as he stooped there over his treasure.

Still he squatted on his heels, rubbing dirt from gold and debating in just what manner he should rise up. He might rise up with a rush and

claw his way out of the hole to meet whatever threatened on the even footing above ground. Or he might rise up slowly and carelessly, and feign casually to discover the thing that breathed at his back. His instinct and every fighting fibre of his body favored the mad, clawing rush to the surface. His intellect, and the craft thereof, favored the slow and cautious meeting with the thing that menaced and which he could not see. And while he debated, a loud, crashing noise burst on his ear. At the same instant he received a stunning blow on the left side of the back, and from the point of impact felt a rush of flame through his flesh. He sprang up in the air, but halfway to his feet collapsed. His body crumpled in like a leaf withered in sudden heat, and he came down, his chest across his pan of gold, his face in the dirt and rock, his legs tangled and twisted because of the restricted space at the bottom of the hole. His legs twitched convulsively several times. His body was shaken as with a mighty ague. There was a slow expansion of the lungs, accompanied by a deep sigh. Then the air was slowly, very slowly, exhaled, and his body as slowly flattened itself down into inertness.

Above, revolver in hand, a man was peering down over the edge of the hole. He peered for a long time at the prone and motionless body beneath him. After a while the stranger sat down on the edge of the hole so that he could see into it, and rested the revolver on his knee. Reaching his hand into a pocket, he drew out a wisp of brown paper. Into this he dropped a few crumbs of tobacco. The combination became a cigarette, brown and squat, with the ends turned in. Not once did he take his eyes from the body at the bottom of the hole. He lighted the cigarette and drew its smoke into his lungs with a caressing intake of the breath. He smoked slowly. Once the cigarette went out and he relighted it. And all the while he studied the body beneath him.

In the end he tossed the cigarette stub away and rose to his feet. He moved to the edge of the hole. Spanning it, a hand resting on each edge, and with the revolver still in the right hand, he muscled his body down into the hole. While his feet were yet a yard from the bottom he released his hands and dropped down.

At the instant his feet struck bottom he saw the pocket-miner's arm leap out, and his own legs knew a swift, jerking grip that overthrew him. In the nature of the jump his revolver-hand was above his head. Swiftly as the grip had flashed about his legs, just as swiftly he brought the revolver down. He was still in the air, his fall in process of completion, when he pulled the trigger. The explosion was deafening in the confined space. The smoke filled the hole so that he could see nothing. He struck the bottom on his back, and like a cat's the pocket-miner's body was on top of him. Even as the miner's body passed on top, the stranger crooked in his right arm to fire; and even in that instant the miner, with a quick thrust of elbow, struck his wrist. The muzzle was thrown up and the bullet thudded into the dirt of the side of the hole.

The next instant the stranger felt the miner's hand grip his wrist. The struggle was now for the revolver. Each man strove to turn it against the other's body. The smoke in the hole was clearing. The stranger, lying on his back, was beginning to see dimly. But suddenly he was blinded by a handful of dirt deliberately flung into his eyes by his antagonist. In that moment of shock his grip on the revolver was broken. In the next moment he felt a smashing darkness descend upon his brain, and in the midst of the darkness even the darkness ceased.

But the pocket-miner fired again and again, until the revolver was empty. Then he tossed it from him and, breathing heavily, sat down on the dead man's legs.

The miner was sobbing and struggling for breath. "Measly skunk!" he panted; "a-campin' on my trail an' lettin' me do the work, an' then shootin' me in the back!"

He was half crying from anger and exhaustion. He peered at the face of the dead man. It was sprinkled with loose dirt and gravel, and it was difficult to distinguish the features.

"Never laid eyes on him before," the miner concluded his scrutiny. "Just a common an' ordinary thief, damn him! An' he shot me in the back! He shot me in the back!"

He opened his shirt and felt himself, front and back, on his left side.

"Went clean through, and no harm done!" he cried jubilantly. "I'll bet he aimed right all right, but he drew the gun over when he pulled the trigger--the cuss! But I fixed 'm! Oh, I fixed 'm!"

His fingers were investigating the bullet-hole in his side, and a shade of regret passed over his face. "It's goin' to be stiffer'n hell," he said. "An' it's up to me to get mended an' get out o' here."

He crawled out of the hole and went down the hill to his camp. Half an hour later he returned, leading his pack-horse. His open shirt disclosed the rude bandages with which he had dressed his wound. He was slow and awkward with his left-hand movements, but that did not prevent his using the arm.

The bight of the pack-rope under the dead man's shoulders enabled him to heave the body out of the hole. Then he set to work gathering up his gold. He worked steadily for several hours, pausing often to rest his stiffening shoulder and to exclaim:

"He shot me in the back, the measly skunk! He shot me in the back!"

When his treasure was quite cleaned up and wrapped securely into a number of blanket-covered parcels, he made an estimate of its value.

"Four hundred pounds, or I'm a Hottentot," he concluded. "Say two hundred in quartz an' dirt--that leaves two hundred pounds of gold. Bill! Wake up! Two hundred pounds of gold! Forty thousand dollars! An' it's yourn--all yourn!"

He scratched his head delightedly and his fingers blundered into an unfamiliar groove. They quested along it for several inches. It was a crease through his scalp where the second bullet had ploughed.

He walked angrily over to the dead man.

"You would, would you?" he bullied. "You would, eh? Well, I fixed you good an' plenty, an' I'll give you decent burial, too. That's more'n you'd have done for me."

He dragged the body to the edge of the hole and toppled it in. It struck the bottom with a dull crash, on its side, the face twisted up to the light. The miner peered down at it.

"An' you shot me in the back!" he said accusingly.

With pick and shovel he filled the hole. Then he loaded the gold on his horse. It was too great a load for the animal, and when he had gained his camp he transferred part of it to his saddle-horse. Even so, he was compelled to abandon a portion of his outfit--pick and shovel and gold-pan, extra food and cooking utensils, and divers odds and ends.

The sun was at the zenith when the man forced the horses at the screen of vines and creepers. To climb the huge boulders the animals were compelled to uprear and struggle blindly through the tangled mass of vegetation. Once the saddle-horse fell heavily and the man removed the pack to get the animal on its feet. After it started on its way again the man thrust his head out from among the leaves and peered up at the hillside.

"The measly skunk!" he said, and disappeared.

There was a ripping and tearing of vines and boughs. The trees surged back and forth, marking the passage of the animals through the midst of them. There was a clashing of steel-shod hoofs on stone, and now and again an oath or a sharp cry of command. Then the voice of the man was raised in song:--

"Tu'n around an' tu'n yo' face
Untoe them sweet hills of grace
(D' pow'rs of sin yo' am scornin'!).

Look about an, look aroun',
Fling yo' sin-pack on d' groun'
(Yo' will meet wid d' Lord in d' mornin'!)."

The song grew faint and fainter, and through the silence crept back the spirit of the place. The stream once more drowsed and whispered; the hum of the mountain bees rose sleepily. Down through the perfume-weighted air fluttered the snowy fluffs of the cottonwoods. The butterflies drifted in and out among the trees, and over all blazed the quiet sunshine. Only remained the hoof-marks in the meadow and the torn hillside to mark the boisterous trail of the life that had broken the peace of the place and passed on.

From: The Project Gutenberg EBook of Moon-Face and Other Stories, by Jack London

Nice Girl With 5 Husbands

Adventure is relative to one's previous experience. Sometimes, in fact, you can't even be sure you're having or not having one!

To be given paid-up leisure and find yourself unable to create is unpleasant for any artist. To be stranded in a cluster of desert cabins with a dozen lonely people in the same predicament only makes it worse. So Tom Dorset was understandably irked with himself and the Tosker-Brown Vacation Fellowships as he climbed with the sun into the valley of red stones. He accepted the chafing of his camera strap against his shoulder as the nagging of conscience. He agreed with the disparaging hisses of the grains of sand rutched by his sneakers, and he wished that the occasional breezes, which faintly echoed the same criticisms, could blow him into a friendlier, less jealous age.

He had no way of knowing that just as there are winds that blow through space, so there are winds that blow through time. Such winds may be strong or weak. The strong ones are rare and seldom blow for short distances, or more of us would know about them. What they pick up is almost always whirled far into the future or past.

This has happened to people. There was Ambrose Bierce, who walked out of America and existence, and there are thousands of others who have disappeared without a trace, though many of these may not have been caught up by time tornadoes and I do not know if a time gale blew across the deck of the Marie Celeste.

Sometimes a time wind is playful, snatching up an object, sporting with it for a season and then returning it unharmed to its original place. Sometimes we may be blown about by whimsical time winds without realizing it. Memory, for example, is a tiny time breeze, so weak that it can ripple only the mind.

A very few time winds are like the monsoon, blowing at fixed intervals, first in one direction, then the other. Such a time wind blows near a balancing rock in a valley of red stones in the American Southwest. Every morning at ten o'clock, it blows a hundred years into the future; every afternoon at two, it blows a hundred years into the past.

Quite a number of people have unwittingly seen time winds in operation. There are misty spots on the sea's horizon and wavery patches over desert sands. There are mirages and will o' the wisps and ice blinks. And there are dust devils, such as Tom Dorset walked into near the balancing rock.

It seemed to him no more than a spiteful upgust of sand, against which he closed his eyes until the warm granules stopped peppering the lids. He opened them to see the balancing rock had silently fallen and lay a quarter buried--no, that couldn't be, he told himself instantly. He had been preoccupied; he must have passed the balancing rock and held its image in his mind.

* * * *

Despite this rationalization he was quite shaken. The strap of his camera slipped slowly down his arm without his feeling it. And just then there stepped around the giant bobbin of the rock an extraordinarily pretty girl with hair the same pinkish copper color.

She was barefoot and wearing a pale blue playsuit rather like a Grecian tunic. But most important, as she stood there toeing his rough shadow in the sand, there was a complete naturalness about her, an absence of sharp edges, as if her personality had weathered without aging, just as the valley seemed to have taken another step toward eternity in the space of an instant.

She must have assumed something of the same gentleness in him, for her faint surprise faded and she asked him, as easily as if he were a friend of five years' standing, "Tell now, do you think a woman can love just one man? All her life? And a man just one woman?"

Tom Dorset made a dazed sound.

His mind searched wildly.

"I do," she said, looking at him as calmly as at a mountain. "I think a man and woman can be each other's world, like Tristan and Isolde or Frederic and Catherine. Those old authors were wise. I don't see why on earth a girl has to spread her love around, no matter how enriching the experiences may be."

"You know, I agree with you," Tom said, thinking he'd caught her idea--it was impossible not to catch her casualness. "I think there's something cheap about the way everybody's supposed to run after sex these days."

"I don't mean that exactly. Tenderness is beautiful, but--" She pouted. "A big family can be vastly crushing. I wanted to declare today a holiday, but they outvoted me. Jock said it didn't chime with our mood cycles. But I was angry with them, so I put on my clothes--"

"Put on--?"

"To make it a holiday," she explained bafflingly. "And I walked here

for a tantrum." She stepped out of Tom's shadow and hopped back. "Ow, the sand's getting hot," she said, rubbing the grains from the pale and uncramped toes.

"You go barefoot a lot?" Tom guessed.

"No, mostly digitals," she replied and took something shimmering from a pocket at her hip and drew it on her foot. It was a high-ankled, transparent moccasin with five separate toes. She zipped it shut with the speed of a card trick, then similarly gloved the other foot. Again the metal-edged slit down the front seemed to close itself.

"I'm behind on the fashions," Tom said, curious. They were walking side by side now, the way she'd come and he'd been going. "How does that zipper work?"

"Magnetic. They're on all my clothes. Very simple." She parted her tunic to the waist, then let it zip together.

"Clever," Tom remarked with a gulp. There seemed no limits to this girl's naturalness.

"I see you're a button man," she said. "You actually believe it's possible for a man and woman to love just each other?"

* * * * *

His chuckle was bitter. He was thinking of Elinore Murphy at Tosker-Brown and a bit about cold-faced Miss Tosker herself. "I sometimes wonder if it's possible for anyone to love anyone."

"You haven't met the right girls," she said.

"Girl," he corrected.

She grinned at him. "You'll make me think you really are a monogamist. What group do you come from?"

"Let's not talk about that," he requested. He was willing to forego knowing how she'd guessed he was from an art group, if he could be spared talking about the Vacation Fellowships and those nervous little cabins.

"My group's very nice on the whole," the girl said, "but at times they can be nefandously exasperating. Jock's the worst, quietly guiding the rest of us like an analyst. How I loathe that man! But Larry's almost as bad, with his shame-faced bumptiousness, as if we'd all sneaked off on a joyride to Venus. And there's Jokichi at the opposite extreme, forever scared he won't distribute his affection equally, dividing it

up into mean little packets like candy for jealous children who would scream if they got one chewy less. And then there's Sasha and Ernest--"

"Who are you talking about?" Tom asked.

"My husbands." She shook her head dolefully. "To find five more difficult men would be positively Martian."

Tom's mind backtracked frantically, searching all conversations at Tosker-Brown for gossip about cultists in the neighborhood. It found nothing and embarked on a wider search. There were the Mormons (was that the word that had sounded like Martian?) but it wasn't the Mormon husbands who were plural. And then there was Oneida (weren't husbands and wives both plural there?) but that was 19th century New England.

"Five husbands?" he repeated. She nodded. He went on, "Do you mean to say five men have got you alone somewhere up here?"

"To be sure not," she replied. "There are my kwives."

"Kwives?"

"Co-wives," she said more slowly. "They can be fascinerously exasperating, too."

* * * * *

Tom's mind did some more searching. "And yet you believe in monogamy?"

She smiled. "Only when I'm having tantrums. It was civilized of you to agree with me."

"But I actually do believe in monogamy," he protested.

She gave his hand a little squeeze. "You are nice, but let's rush now. I've finished my tantrum and I want you to meet my group. You can fresh yourself with us."

As they hurried across the heated sands, Tom Dorset felt for the first time a twinge of uneasiness. There was something about this girl, more than her strange clothes and the odd words she used now and then, something almost--though ghosts don't wear digitals--spectral.

They scrambled up a little rise, digging their footgear into the sand, until they stood on a long flat. And there, serpentining around two great clumps of rock, was a many-windowed adobe ranch house with a roof like fresh soot.

"Oh, they've put on their clothes," his companion exclaimed with

pleasure. "They've decided to make it a holiday after all."

Tom spotted a beard in the group swarming out to meet them. Its cultish look gave him a momentary feeling of superiority, followed by an equally momentary apprehension--the five husbands were certainly husky. Then both feelings were swallowed up in the swirl of introduction.

He told his own name, found that his companion's was Lois Wolver, then smiling faces began to bob toward his, his hands were shaken, his cheeks were kissed, he was even spun around like blind man's bluff, so that he lost track of the husbands and failed to attach Mary, Rachel, Simone and Joyce to the right owners.

He did notice that Jokichi was an Oriental with a skin as tight as enameled china, and that Rachel was a tall slim Negro girl. Also someone said, "Joyce isn't a Wolver, she's just visiting."

He got a much clearer impression of the clothes than the names. They were colorful, costly-looking, and mostly Egyptian and Cretan in inspiration. Some of them would have been quite immodest, even compared to Miss Tosker's famous playsuits, except that the wearers didn't seem to feel so.

"There goes the middle-morning rocket!" one of them eagerly cried.

Tom looked up with the rest, but his eyes caught the dazzling sun. However, he heard a faint roaring that quickly sank in volume and pitch, and it reminded him that the Army had a rocket testing range in this area. He had little interest in science, but he hadn't known they were on a daily schedule.

"Do you suppose it's off the track?" he asked anxiously.

"Not a chance," someone told him--the beard, he thought. The assurance of the tones gave him a possible solution. Scientists came from all over the world these days and might have all sorts of advanced ideas. This could be a group working at a nearby atomic project and leading its peculiar private life on the side.

* * * * *

As they eddied toward the house he heard Lois remind someone, "But you finally did declare it a holiday," and a husband who looked like a gay pharaoh respond, "I had another see at the mood charts and I found a subtle surge I'd missed."

Meanwhile the beard (a black one) had taken Tom in charge. Tom wasn't sure of his name, but he had a tan skin, a green sarong, and a fiercely jovial expression. "The swimming pool's around there, the landing

spot's on the other side," he began, then noticed Tom gazing at the sooty roof. "Sun power cells," he explained proudly. "They store all the current we need."

Tom felt his idea confirmed. "Wonder you don't use atomic power," he observed lightly.

The beard nodded. "We've been asked that. Matter of esthetics. Why waste sunlight or use hard radiations needlessly? Of course, you might feel differently. What's your group, did you say?"

"Tosker-Brown," Tom told him, adding when the beard frowned, "the Fellowship people, you know."

"I don't," the beard confessed. "Where are you located?"

Tom briefly described the ranch house and cabins at the other end of the valley.

"Comic, I can't place it." The beard shrugged. "Here come the children."

A dozen naked youngsters raced around the ranch house, followed by a woman in a vaguely African dress open down the sides.

"Yours?" Tom asked.

"Ours," the beard answered.

"C'est un homme!"

"Regardez des vêtements!"

"No need to practice, kids; this is a holiday," the beard told them. "Tom, Helen," he said, introducing the woman with the air-conditioned garment. "Her turn today to companion die Kinder."

One of the latter rapped on the beard's knee. "May we show the stranger our things?" Instantly the others joined in pleading. The beard shot an inquiring glance at Tom, who nodded. A moment later the small troupe was hurrying him toward a spacious lean-to at the end of the ranch house. It was chuckful of strange toys, rocks and plants, small animals in cages and out, and the oddest model airplanes, or submarines. But Tom was given no time to look at any one thing for long.

"See my crystals? I grew them."

"Smell my mutated gardenias. Tell now, isn't there a difference?" There didn't seem to be, but he nodded.

"Look at my squabbits." This referred to some long-eared white squirrels nibbling carrots and nuts.

"Here's my newest model spaceship, a DS-57-B. Notice the detail." The oldest boy shoved one of the submarine affairs in his face.

* * * * *

Tom felt like a figure that is being tugged about in a rococo painting by wide pink ribbons in the chubby hands of naked cherubs. Except that these cherubs were slim and tanned, fantastically energetic, and apparently of depressingly high IQ. (What these scientists did to children!) He missed Lois and was grateful for the single little girl solemnly skipping rope in a corner and paying no attention to him.

The odd lingo she repeated stuck in his mind: "Gik-lo, I-o, Rik-o, Gis-so. Gik-lo, I-o...."

Suddenly the air was filled with soft chimes. "Lunch," the children shouted and ran away.

Tom followed at a soberer pace along the wall of the ranch house. He glanced in the huge windows, curious about the living and sleeping arrangements of the Wolverers, but the panes were strangely darkened. Then he entered the wide doorway through which the children had scampered and his curiosity turned to wonder.

A resilient green floor that wasn't flat, but sloped up toward the white of the far wall like a breaking wave. Chairs like giants' hands tenderly cupped. Little tables growing like mushrooms and broad-leafed plants out of the green floor. A vast picture window showing the red rocks.

Yet it was the wood-paneled walls that electrified his artistic interest. They blossomed with fruits and flowers, deep and poignantly carved in several styles. He had never seen such work.

He became aware of a silence and realized that his hosts and hostesses were smiling at him from around a long table. Moved by a sudden humility, he knelt and unlaced his sneakers and added them to the pile of sandals and digitals by the door. As he rose, a soft and comic piping started and he realized that beyond the table the children were lined up, solemnly puffing at little wooden flutes and recorders. He saw the empty chair at the table and went toward it, conscious for the moment of nothing but his dusty feet.

He was disappointed that Lois wasn't sitting next to him, but the food reminded him that he was hungry. There was a charming little steak, striped black and brown with perfection, and all sorts of vegetables

and fruits, one or two of which he didn't recognize.

"Flown from Africa," someone explained to him.

These sly scientists, he thought, living behind their security curtain in the most improbable world!

When they were sitting with coffee and wine, and the children had finished their concert and were busy at another table, he asked, "How do you manage all this?"

Jock, the gay pharaoh, shrugged. "It's not difficult."

Rachel, the slim Negro, chuckled in her throat. "We're just people, Tom."

He tried to phrase his question without mentioning money. "What do you all do?"

"Jock's a uranium miner," Larry (the beard) answered, briskly taking over. "Rachel's an algae farmer. I'm a rocket pilot. Lois--"

* * * * *

Although pleased at this final confirmation of his guess, Tom couldn't help feeling a surge of uneasiness. "Sure you should be telling me these things?"

Larry laughed. "Why not? Lois and Jokichi have been exchange-workers in China the last six months."

"Mostly digging ditches," Jokichi put in with a smile.

"--and Sasha's in an assembly plant. Helen's a psychiatrist. Oh, we just do ordinary things. Now we're on grand vacation."

"Grand vacation?"

"When all of us have a vacation together," Larry explained. "What do you do?"

"I'm an artist," Tom said, taking out a cigaret.

"But what else?" Larry asked.

Tom felt an angry embarrassment. "Just an artist," he mumbled, cigaret in mouth, digging in his pockets for a match.

"Hold on," said Joyce beside him and pointed a silver pencil at the tip

of the cigaret. He felt a faint thrill in his lips and then started back, coughing. The cigaret was lighted.

"Please mutate my poppy seeds, Mommy." A little girl had darted to Joyce from the children's table.

"You're a very dirty little girl," Joyce told her without reproof. "Hold them out." She briefly directed the silver pencil at the clay pellets on the grimy little palm. The little girl shivered delightedly. "I love ultrasonics, they feel so funny." She scampered off.

Tom cleared his throat. "I must say I'm tremendously impressed with the wood carvings. I'd like to photograph them. Oh, Lord!"

"What's the matter?" Rachel asked.

"I lost my camera somewhere."

"Camera?" Jokichi showed interest. "You mean one for stills?"

"Yes."

"What kind?"

"A Leica," Tom told him.

Jokichi seemed impressed. "That is interesting. I've never seen one of those old ones."

"Tom's a button man," Lois remarked by way of explanation, apparently. "Was the camera in a brown case? You dropped it where we met. We can get it later."

"Good, I'd really like to take those pictures," Tom said. "Incidentally, who did the carvings?"

"We did," Jock said. "Together."

Tom was grateful that the scamper of the children out of the room saved him from having to reply. He couldn't think of anything but a grunt of astonishment.

The conversation split into a group of chats about something called a psych machine, trips to Russia, the planet Mars, and several artists Tom had never heard of. He wanted to talk to Lois, but she was one of the group gabbling about Mars like children. He felt suddenly uneasy and out of things, and neither Rachel's deprecating remarks about her section of the wood carvings nor Joyce's interesting smiles helped much. He was glad when they all began to get up. He wandered outside

and made his way to the children's lean-to, feeling very depressed.

* * * *

Once again he was the center of a friendly naked cluster, except for the same solemn-faced little girl skipping rope. A rather malicious but not very hopeful whim prompted him to ask the youngest, "What's one and one?"

"Ten," the shaver answered glibly. Tom felt pleased.

"It could also be two," the oldest boy remarked.

"I'll say," Tom agreed. "What's the population of the world?"

"About seven hundred million."

Tom nodded noncommittally and, grabbing at the first long word that he thought of, turned to the eldest girl. "What's poliomyelitis?"

"Never heard of it," she said.

The solemn little girl kept droning the same ridiculous chant: "Gik-lo, I-o, Rik-o, Gis-so."

His ego eased, Tom went outside and there was Lois.

"What's the matter?" she asked.

"Nothing," he said.

She took his hand. "Have we pushed ourselves at you too much? Has our jabbering bothered you? We're a loud-mouthed family and I didn't think to ask if you were loning."

"Loning?"

"Solituding."

"In a way," he said. They didn't speak for a moment. Then, "Are you happy, Lois, in your life here?" he asked.

Her smile was instant. "Of course. Don't you like my group?"

He hesitated. "They make me feel rather no good," he said, and then admitted, "but in a way I'm more attracted to them than any people I've ever met."

"You are?" Her grip on his hand tightened. "Then why don't you stay

with us for a while? I like you. It's too early to propose anything, but I think you have a quality our group lacks. You could see how you fit in. And there's Joyce. She's just visiting, too. You wouldn't have to lone unless you wanted."

Before he could think, there was a rhythmic rush of feet and the Wolverers were around them.

"We're swimming," Simone announced.

Lois looked at Tom inquiringly. He smiled his willingness, started to mention he didn't have trunks, then realized that wouldn't be news here. He wondered whether he would blush.

Jock fell in beside him as they rounded the ranch house. "Larry's been telling me about your group at the other end of the valley. It's comic, but I've whirled down the valley a dozen times and never spotted any sort of place there. What's it like?"

"A ranch house and several cabins."

* * * * *

Jock frowned. "Comic I never saw it." His face cleared. "How about whirling over there? You could point it out to me."

"It's really there," Tom said uneasily. "I'm not making it up."

"Of course," Jock assured him. "It was just an idea."

"We could pick up your camera on the way," Lois put in.

The rest of the group had turned back from the huge oval pool and the dark blue and flashing thing beyond it, and stood gay-colored against the pool's pale blue shimmer.

"How about it?" Jock asked them. "A whirl before we bathe?"

Two or three said yes besides Lois, and Jock led the way toward the helicopter that Tom now saw standing beyond the pool, its beetle body as blue as a scarab, its vanes flashing silver.

The others piled in. Tom followed as casually as he could, trying to suppress the pounding of his heart. "Wonder you don't go by rocket," he remarked lightly.

Jock laughed. "For such a short trip?"

The vanes began to thrum. Tom sat stiffly, gripping the sides of

the seat, then realized that the others had sunk back lazily in the cushions. There was a moment of strain and they were falling ahead and up. Looking out the side, Tom saw for a moment the sooty roof of the ranch house and the blue of the pool and the pinkish umber of tanned bodies. Then the helicopter lurched gently around. Without warning a miserable uneasiness gripped him, a desire to cling mixed with an urge to escape. He tried to convince himself it was fear of the height.

He heard Lois tell Jock, "That's the place, down by that rock that looks like a wrecked spaceship."

The helicopter began to fall forward. Tom felt Lois' hand on his.

"You haven't answered my question," she said.

"What?" he asked dully.

"Whether you'll stay with us. At least for a while."

He looked at her. Her smile was a comfort. He said, "If I possibly can."

"What could possibly stop you?"

"I don't know," he answered abstractedly.

"You're strange," Lois told him. "There's a weight of sadness in you. As if you lived in a less happy age. As if it weren't 2050."

"Twenty?" he repeated, awakening from his thoughts with a jerk. "What's the time?" he asked anxiously.

"Two," Jock said. The word sounded like a knell.

"You need cheering," Lois announced firmly.

Amid a whoosh of air rebounding from earth, they jounced gently down. Lois vaulted out. "Come on," she said.

Tom followed her. "Where?" he asked stupidly, looking around at the red rocks through the settling sand cloud stirred by the vanes.

"Your camera," she told him, laughing. "Over there. Come on, I'll race you."

He started to run with her and then his uneasiness got beyond his control. He ran faster and faster. He saw Lois catch her foot on a rock and go down sprawling, but he couldn't stop. He ran desperately around the rock and into a gust of up-whirling sand that terrified him with its suddenness. He tried to escape from the stinging, blinding

gust, but there was the nightmarish fright that his wild strides were carrying him nowhere.

Then the sand settled. He stopped running and looked around him. He was standing by the balancing rock. He was gasping. At his feet the rusty brown leather of the camera case peeped from the sand. Lois was nowhere in sight. Neither was the helicopter. The valley seemed different, rawer--one might almost have said younger.

Hours after dark he trailed into Tosker-Brown. Curtained lights still glowed from a few cabins. He was footsore, bewildered, frightened. All afternoon and through the twilight and into the moonlit evening that turned the red rocks black, he had searched the valley. Nowhere had he been able to find the soot-roofed ranch house of the Wolver. He hadn't even been able to locate the rock like a giant bobbin where he'd met Lois.

During the next days he often returned to the valley. But he never found anything. And he never happened to be near the balancing rock when the time winds blew at ten and two, though once or twice he did see dust devils. Then he went away and eventually forgot.

In his casual reading he ran across popular science articles describing the binary system of numbers used in electronic calculating machines, where one and one make ten. He always skipped them. And more than once he saw the four equations expressing Einstein's generalized theory of gravitation:

[Illustration: Einstein's equation.]

He never connected them with the little girl's chant: "Gik-lo, I-o, Rik-o, Gis-so."

[Transcriber's Note: This etext was produced from
Galaxy Science Fiction April 1951.
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End of Project Gutenberg's Nice Girl With 5 Husbands, by Fritz Leiber

CERES AND PROSERPINA.

[Sidenote: Ceres and Proserpina.]

Ceres (Demeter), daughter of Cronus and Rhea, and one of Jupiter's numerous consorts, was goddess of agriculture and civilization. Her manifold cares were shared by her daughter, Proserpina (Cora, Pherephatta, Persephone), the goddess of vegetation. Whenever her duties permitted, this fair young goddess hastened off to the Island of Sicily, her favorite place of resort, where she wandered about all day long, attended by a merry girlish train, gathering flowers, on the green slopes of Mount Ætna, and danced with the nymphs in the beautiful plain of Enna.

One day, weary of labor, Proserpina called these fair playmates to join her and spend a merry day gathering flowers.

"And one fair morn--
Not all the ages blot it--on the side
Of Ætna we were straying. There was then
Summer nor winter, springtide nor the time
Of harvest, but the soft unfailing sun
Shone always, and the sowing time was one
With reaping."

Lewis Morris.

[Sidenote: Pluto kidnaps Proserpina.]

The maidens sang merry lays as they wound their long garlands; and their joyous voices and ripples of silvery laughter attracted the attention of Pluto, just then driving past in his dark chariot drawn by four fiery coal-black steeds. To ascertain whence these sounds proceeded, the god stepped out of his car, and cautiously peeped through the thick foliage.

He saw Proserpina sitting on a mossy bank, almost buried in many-hued blossoms, her laughing companions picturesquely grouped around her. One glance sufficed to convince Pluto of her loveliness and grace, and to make him feel that his happiness depended on the possession of this bright young creature.

Long ere this, he had tried to persuade one after another of the goddesses to share his gloomy throne; but one and all had refused the honor, and declined to accompany him to a land where the sun never shone, the birds never sang, and the flowers never bloomed. Hurt and disappointed by these rebuffs, Pluto had finally registered a solemn

vow never to go wooing again; and so, instead of gently inviting Proserpina to become his queen, he resolved to kidnap her.

Straight through the bushes he strode, direct to the spot where she was seated. The noise of crackling branches and hasty footsteps made the assembled maidens swiftly turn. One glance sufficed to identify the intruder, for none but he could boast of such a dark, lowering countenance; and all exclaimed in mingled wonder and terror at his unwonted presence in those sunlit regions.

[Illustration: ABDUCTION OF PROSERPINA.--Schobelt.]

"'Tis he, 'tis he: he comes to us
From the depths of Tartarus.
For what of evil doth he roam
From his red and gloomy home,
In the center of the world,
Where the sinful dead are hurled?
Mark him as he moves along,
Drawn by horses black and strong,
Such as may belong to Night
Ere she takes her morning flight.
Now the chariot stops: the god
On our grassy world hath trod:
Like a Titan steppeth he,
Yet full of his divinity.
On his mighty shoulders lie
Raven locks, and in his eye
A cruel beauty, such as none
Of us may wisely look upon."

Barry Cornwall.

Frightened by his impetuous approach, the trembling nymphs first crowded around Proserpina, who, in her astonishment and trepidation, dropped all her pretty flowers and stood motionless among them. Her uncertainty as to his purpose was only momentary, for, catching her in his brawny arms ere she could make an attempt to escape, he bore her off to his chariot, in spite of prayers and struggles, and drove away as fast as his fleet steeds could carry him.

He was soon out of hearing of the wild cries and lamentations of the nymphs, who vainly pursued him, and tried to overtake their beloved mistress. Afraid lest Ceres should come and force him to relinquish his new-won treasure, Pluto drove faster and faster, nor paused for an instant until he reached the banks of the Cyane River, whose waters, at his approach, began to seethe and roar in a menacing fashion, and spread themselves as much as possible, to check him in his flight.

Pluto quickly perceived that to attempt to cross the river in his chariot would be madness, while by retracing his footsteps he ran the risk of meeting Ceres, and being forced to relinquish his prize. He therefore decided to have recourse to other means, and, seizing his terrible two-pronged fork, struck the earth such a mighty blow, that a great crevice opened under his feet, through which horses and chariot plunged down into the darkness of the Lower World.

Proserpina turned her weeping eyes to catch a parting glimpse of the fair earth she was leaving, and then, with a fond thought of her anxious mother, who, when evening came, would vainly seek her child in all her favorite haunts, she quickly flung her girdle into the Cyane, and called to the water nymph to carry it to Ceres.

Elated by the complete success of his bold venture, and no longer fearful of immediate pursuit, the happy god strained his fair captive to his breast, pressed kisses on her fresh young cheeks, and tried to calm her terrors, as the black steeds rushed faster and faster along the dark passage, nor paused until they reached the foot of their master's throne.

"Pleased as he grasps her in his iron arms,
Frights with soft sighs, with tender words alarms."

Darwin.

[Sidenote: Ceres' search.]

In the mean while the sun had sunk below the Sicilian horizon; and Ceres, returning from the fields of fast-ripening grain to her own dwelling, sought for the missing Proserpina, of whom no trace could be found except the scattered flowers. Hither and thither the mother wandered, calling her daughter, and wondering where she could be, and why she did not come bounding to meet her. As time passed, and still Proserpina did not appear, Ceres' heart beat fast with apprehension, and the tears coursed down her cheeks as she rushed about from place to place, calling her daughter.

"What ails her that she comes not home?
Demeter seeks her far and wide,
And gloomy-browed doth ceaseless roam
From many a morn till eventide.
'My life, immortal though it be,
Is naught!' she cries, 'for want of thee,
Persephone--Persephone!'"

Ingelow.

Night came, and Ceres, kindling a torch at the volcanic fires of Mount

Ætna, continued her search. Day dawned, and still the mother called, awakening the morning echoes with her longing cries for her child. Her daily duties were all neglected. The rain no longer refreshed the drooping flowers, the grain was parched by the ardent rays of the sun, and the grass all perished, while Ceres roamed over hill and dale in search of Proserpina.

Weary at last of her hopeless quest, the goddess seated herself by the wayside, near the city of Eleusis, and gave way to her overwhelming grief.

"Long was thine anxious search
For lovely Proserpine, nor didst thou break
Thy mournful fast, till the far-fam'd Eleusis
Received thee wandering."

Orphic Hymn.

[Sidenote: Ceres and Triptolemus.]

To avoid recognition, she had assumed the appearance of an aged crone; and as she sat there by the wayside, in tears, she attracted the compassionate inquiries of the daughters of Celeus, king of the country. Having heard her bewail the loss of her child, they entreated her to come to the palace, and, knowing nothing could so well soothe a breaking heart, offered her the charge of their infant brother Triptolemus.

Ceres, touched by their ready sympathy, accepted the offer; and when she arrived at the palace, the royal heir was intrusted to her care. Tenderly the goddess kissed the puny child's little pinched face; and at her touch the child became rosy and well, to the unbounded astonishment of the royal family and all the court.

In the night, while Ceres sat alone with her charge, it occurred to her that she might confer a still greater blessing upon him, that of immortality: so she anointed his limbs with nectar, murmured a powerful charm, and placed him upon the red-hot coals, to consume all the perishable elements left in his body.

The queen, Metaneira, who had thought it somewhat imprudent to leave the child thus alone with a stranger, now stole noiselessly into the apartment, and with a wild shriek rushed to the fire and snatched her child out of the flames, pressed him anxiously to her breast, and, after ascertaining that he was quite unharmed, turned to vent her indignation upon the careless nurse; but the aged beggar woman had vanished, and in her stead she confronted the radiant Goddess of Agriculture.

[Illustration: CERES. (Vatican, Rome.)]

"From her fragrant robes
A lovely scent was scattered, and afar
Shone light emitted from her skin divine,
And yellow locks upon her shoulders waved;
White as from lightning, all the house was filled
With splendor."

Homeric Hymn.

With a gentle reproof to the queen for her untimely interference, Ceres explained what she fain would have done, and vanished, to continue her wanderings in other lands. She finally returned to Italy; and, while wandering along the river banks one day, the waters suddenly cast a glittering object at her feet. Stooping hastily to ascertain what it might be, she recognized the girdle her daughter had worn when she had parted from her in Sicily.

Joyfully she embraced the token, and, thinking she must now be upon Proserpina's track, hastened on until she came to a crystal fountain, by whose side she sat down to rest. Her eyes were heavy with the combined effect of tears, fatigue, and oppressive heat, and she was about to lose all consciousness of her trouble in sleep, when the murmur of the fountain increased, until she fancied it was talking; not as mortals do, but in its own silvery accents.

[Sidenote: Arethusa and Alpheus.]

The goddess was not mistaken; for a few minutes later she could distinguish words, and heard the fountain entreat her to listen, if she would hear what had befallen her child. The fountain then went on to tell how she had not always been a mere stream, but was once a nymph, called Arethusa, in Diana's train, and how, overcome by the heat, she had once sought a cool stream wherein she might bathe her heated limbs.

[Illustration: A NYMPH.--Kray.]

She soon found one, the Alpheus River, and selected a spot where the trees hung over the limpid waters, where the sand on the bottom was fine and even, and where no mortal eyes could see her as she threw aside her sandals and outer garments. She was enjoying the refreshing sensation of the water rippling around her hot limbs, and was reveling in the complete solitude, when suddenly the river, until now as smooth as a mirror, was ruffled by waves, which crept nearer and nearer to the startled nymph, until in affright she sprang out of the water.

Then a voice--the voice of the river god Alpheus--was heard, calling to her in pleading accents to stay her flight and lend an ear to his wooing; but when the impetuous god, instead of waiting for an answer to his suit, rose up out of the water and rushed to clasp her in his arms, she turned and fled in great terror. She fled, but he pursued. Over hill and dale, through forest and field, Arethusa ran, still closely followed by her too ardent lover, until, exhausted, she paused for breath, crying aloud to Diana to come to her rescue.

Her prayer was answered. A moment later she was enveloped in a thick mist and transformed into a fountain. Alpheus could no longer see her, but wandered about, bewailing her disappearance, and calling her in passionate accents.

"O Arethusa, peerless nymph! why fear
Such tenderness as mine? Great Dian, why,
Why didst thou hear her prayer? Oh that I
Were rippling round her dainty fairness now,
Circling about her waist, and striving how
To entice her to a dive! then stealing in
Between her luscious lips and eyelids thin."

Keats.

The misty cloud in which Arethusa had been enveloped by Diana's protecting care was soon blown away by a mischievous breath from Zephyrus; and Alpheus, who was still hovering near there, suddenly beholding a fountain where none had ever existed before, surmised what had happened. Changing himself into an impetuous torrent, he rushed to join his beloved, who sprang out of her mossy bed, and hurried on over sticks and stones, until Diana, seeing her new plight, opened a crevice, through which she glided away from the bright sunlight she loved so well into the depths of Pluto's realm.

While gliding there in the gloom, Arethusa had caught a glimpse of Proserpina on her sable throne, beside the stern-browed Pluto. She could not, however, pause to inquire how she came there, but hurried on breathlessly, until another crevice offered her the means of returning to the upper world, and seeing once more the blue sky and sun on the Sicilian plains.

The monotonous murmur of the fountain now subsided again into its usual undertone; and Ceres, knowing where to seek her daughter, was about to depart, when she heard the sudden rush and roar of a large body of water. She immediately turned, and beheld the torrent Alpheus, who, after a disconsolate search underground for the lost Arethusa, had found a crevice, through which he passed to join his beloved on the Sicilian plains.

"Alpheus, Elis' stream, they say,
Beneath the seas here found his way,
And now his waters interfuse
With thine, O fountain Arethuse,
Beneath Sicilian skies."

Virgil (Conington's tr.).

In spite of her previous efforts to escape him, Arethusa must still have been very glad to see him once more, for Ceres heard her murmur contentedly as she sank into his arms and listened to his louder tones of rapturous love.

Maidens in Greece were wont to throw fresh garlands into the Alpheus River; and it was said the selfsame flowers, carried away by his current, soon reappeared in the Sicilian fountain, carried there as love offerings by the enamored river.

"O my beloved, how divinely sweet
Is the pure joy when kindred spirits meet!
Like him, the river god, whose waters flow,
With love their only light, through caves below,
Wafting in triumph all the flowery braids
And festal rings, with which Olympic maids
Have decked his current, an offering meet
To lay at Arethusa's shining feet.
Think when at last he meets his fountain bride
What perfect love must thrill the blended tide!
And lost in each, till mingling into one,
Their lot the same for shadow or for sun,
A type of true love, to the deep they run."

Moore.

[Sidenote: Ceres' mourning.]

Now, although poor Ceres had ascertained where to find her missing daughter, her grief was not at all diminished, for she felt convinced that Pluto would never willingly relinquish her. She therefore withdrew into a dark cave to mourn unseen, and still further neglected her wonted duties.

Famine threatened to visit the people, and they prayed and clamored for her aid; but, absorbed in grief, she paid no heed to their distress, and vowed that nothing on earth should grow, with her permission, as long as her daughter was detained in Hades. In despair at this frightful state of affairs, the people then besought Jupiter to pity the sufferings they endured, and to allow Proserpina to revisit the upper world once more.

"Arise, and set the maiden free;
Why should the world such sorrow dree
By reason of Persephone?"

Ingelow.

As soon as she became aware of this petition, Ceres hastened to Olympus, to join her supplications to the cries which rose from all parts of the earth; until Jupiter, wearied by these importunities, consented to Proserpina's return, upon condition, however, that she had not touched any food during the whole time of her sojourn in the Infernal Regions.

"Last, Zeus himself,
Pitying the evil that was done, sent forth
His messenger beyond the western rim
To fetch me back to earth."

Lewis Morris.

[Sidenote: The pomegranate seeds.]

Ceres in person hastened to her daughter's new abode, and was about to lead her away in spite of Pluto, when a spirit, Ascalaphus, suddenly declared that the queen had partaken of some pomegranate seeds that very day. Proserpina could not refute the charge, and Jupiter decreed that for every seed she had eaten she should spend one month of every year in her husband's gloomy kingdom.

Thus it came about that Proserpina was condemned to spend one half the year in Hades, and could linger on the bright earth only for six months at a time.

Mercury was chosen to lead her to and from Hades; and, whenever he brought her out of her gloomy prison, the skies became blue and sunny, the grass sprang fresh and green beneath her elastic tread, the flowers bloomed along her way, the birds trilled forth their merry lays, and all was joy and brightness.

"And when, in springtime, with sweet-smelling flowers
Of various kinds the earth doth bloom, thou'lt come
From gloomy darkness back--a mighty joy
To gods and mortal men."

Homeric Hymn.

[Sidenote: Proserpina's return.]

Ceres, happy once more in the possession of her beloved daughter, cheerfully and diligently attended to all her duties, and blessed the earth with plenty; but when the six months were over, and the skies wept and all nature mourned Proserpina's departure, she again returned to her cave, whence no entreaties could draw her.

As for the merry, happy-natured Proserpina, the moment Hades' portals closed behind her, she became pale and melancholy; and none would have dreamed the playful, flower-crowned Goddess of Vegetation was identical with the sad-faced, sable-vested Queen of Hades (now called Hecate), who held a pomegranate in one hand, and a torch in the other. Proserpina, like Adonis, was the personification of vegetation, visibly prosperous during the six favorable months of the year, and lurking hidden under the cold ground during the remainder of the time.

[Sidenote: Worship of Ceres.]

Many beautiful temples were dedicated to Ceres and Proserpina in Greece and Italy, where yearly festivals, the Thesmophoria and the Cerealia, were celebrated with great pomp.

"To Ceres chief her annual rites be paid,
On the green turf, beneath a fragrant shade,
When winter ends, and spring serenely shines,
Then fat the lambs, then mellow are the wines,
Then sweet are slumbers on the flowery ground,
Then with thick shades are lofty mountains crown'd.
Let all the hinds bend low at Ceres' shrine;
Mix honey sweet, for her, with milk and mellow wine;
Thrice lead the victim the new fruits around,
And Ceres call, and choral hymns resound:
Presume not, swains, the ripen'd grain to reap,
Till crown'd with oak in antic dance ye leap,
Invoking Ceres, and in solemn lays,
Exalt your rural queen's immortal praise."

Virgil (C. Pitt's tr.).

To commemorate her long search for her daughter, Ceres returned to Eleusis, taught her former nursling, Triptolemus, the various secrets of agriculture, and gave him her chariot, bidding him travel everywhere, and teach the people how to plow, sow, and reap; and then she instituted the Eleusinia, festivals held in honor of her daughter and herself at Eleusis.

Triptolemus did not fail to carry out the goddess's instructions, and journeyed far and wide, until he finally reached the court of Lyncus, King of Scythia, where the false monarch would have treacherously slain him had not Ceres by timely interference prevented the execution

of his base purpose by changing the traitor into a lynx, the emblem of perfidy.

Ceres was generally represented as a fair, matronly woman, clad in flowing draperies, sometimes crowned with wheat ears, and bearing a sheaf of grain and a sickle, or with a plow and a horn of plenty disgorging its wealth of fruit and flowers at her feet. Groves were frequently dedicated to her; and any mortal rash enough to lay the ax on one of these sacred trees was sure to incur the goddess's wrath, as is proved by the story of Erisichthon.

[Sidenote: Story of Erisichthon.]

This man was evidently a freethinker, and, to show his contempt for the superstitious veneration paid to Ceres' trees, took his ax and cut down one of her sacred oaks. At his first blow, blood began to flow from the tree; but, undeterred by the phenomenon or the entreaties of the bystanders, Erisichthon continued. Finally, annoyed by the importunities of the spectators, he turned and slew one or two, and then completed his sacrilege.

Ceres, incensed by his insolence and cruelty, devised a terrible chastisement for the unfortunate man, and sent Famine to gnaw his vitals, and torment him night and day. The wretch, tortured by a hunger which no amount of food could allay, disposed of all his property to obtain the means of procuring nourishment; but his monstrous appetite continued, and, as he had but one daughter left, he sold her as a slave to obtain food.

The girl's master left her alone for a moment upon the seashore, and, in answer to her prayer, Neptune delivered her from servitude by changing her into a fisherman. When the master returned and found his slave gone, he questioned the fisherman, and, not obtaining any satisfactory information, departed. Neptune then restored the maiden to her own form, and let her return home; but, as her father sold her again, the god was obliged to interfere once more in her behalf, until at last Erisichthon, deprived of means to procure food, devoured himself.

[Sidenote: Ceres and Stellio.]

Another anecdote illustrating Ceres' power is told about a lad, Stellio, who made fun of the goddess when she was journeying, on account of the haste with which she disposed of a bowl of gruel offered by some charitable person. To punish the boy for his rudeness, Ceres flung the remainder of her gruel into his face, and changed him into a lizard.

From: The Project Gutenberg EBook of Myths of Greece and Rome, by H. A. Guerber

Antwerp and the City of Windmills.

From Paris to Antwerp--Along the Route--Thrifty Farmers--Antwerp--Dogs in Harness--The River--Old Churches--Chimes--An Inappreciative Listener--Steen Museum--Instruments of Torture--Lace Industry--Living Expenses--Hospitality--The City of Windmills--Watery Highways--A City of Canals--The Maas River--The Houses on the Canals--Travel by Boats--Novel Scenes--Costly Headgear--Dutch Costumes--Powerful Draught Horses--No Bonbons--Chocolate Candy--In the Market-Place--The Belle of the Market--Photographs--Wooden Shoes--Drawbridges--Blowing the Horn--Ancient Relics--The Sword of Columbus.

The country between Paris and Antwerp is delightful, and very different from the lovely landscapes of England. Farms, towns, villages, all present a novel aspect, and the people speak a language very strange to our ears. The great fields along the road are not fenced in but are only distinguished from one another by the difference in the appearance of the crops. In England, as I have said, there are beautiful hedges everywhere separating the fields and meadows.

Here are strong men and women working side by side in the fields. Here are buxom country lasses, rope in hand, one end of which is attached to the horns of the leader of a herd of cattle. These are glowing pictures, and the clean farmhouses, fields and roads are abundant evidences of the industry and thrift of the people.

Antwerp may well be termed a city of charms and fascinations. It is the most attractive and interesting town in Belgium, and at the same time one of the strongest fortresses in Europe. Our first impression of this place is of clean orderly streets, paved with the square Belgian blocks which endure so well the wear and tear of constant travel. The houses and shops are of a quaint, ancient style of architecture, and very picturesque effect. During the middle ages, Antwerp was a very important, as well as wealthy city, and its splendid docks, its wonderful cathedral, its magnificent paintings all testify that a period of exceptional prosperity has been granted to it in the past.

A strange sight are the heavy freight wagons, with their broad wheels and various loads, drawn by large powerful dogs. In many cases the dogs, of which there are sometimes two or three, are strapped under the body of the wagon by a kind of leather harness, or, if the owner be too poor, rope is substituted. A man or woman assists in drawing the load, which is frequently so massive as to appear disproportioned to the combined strength of man and beast. The dogs are bred and trained for their peculiar vocation, and are never allowed to shirk their part of the

burden imposed upon them. Should they attempt to do so, they are quickly recalled to their duty by a small whip, hence the maximum result may be obtained from their labor. Their muscular limbs show plainly that they possess great strength and endurance. Large powerful draught horses with well defined muscles are also used. These horses must weigh fully from twelve to sixteen hundred pounds, and when four or six are harnessed abreast, tons of merchandise may be moved in one load. Antwerp, a city of about 260,000 inhabitants, is one of the greatest seaports of Europe, having splendid facilities for ships of every size, and huge warehouses for the landing and storage of immense quantities of merchandise. It is finely situated on the Schelde, which is at this point one third of a mile wide and thirty feet deep, and serves as an outlet for the commerce of Germany as well as Belgium. The town was founded in the seventh century, and has passed through many vicissitudes, attaining the summit of its glory under the Emperor Charles V., about the close of the fifteenth century. At that period it is said that thousands of vessels lay in the Schelde at one time, and a hundred or more arrived and departed daily. Its decline began under the Spanish rule, when the terrors of the Inquisition banished thousands of its most valuable citizens, who sought refuge in other countries, especially in England, where they established silk factories, and assisted greatly in stimulating the commerce of the country. After scenes of war and frightful devastation, varied by brief seasons of prosperity, the tide of success once more returned to the old harbors about 1863, and since then its commerce has increased in a greater ratio than that of any other European city. The Flemish population predominates, and its characteristics are those of a German town.

We enjoy many lovely views along the river frontage, where dozens upon dozens of ships lining the banks, offer a variety of pictures to the lover of water scenes, besides the fine prospect of the town from the river.

[Illustration: "The largest and handsomest Gothic church in the Netherlands." (_See page 107._)]

That the Cathedral is the first attraction for the tourist goes without saying, and those are well repaid who climb far up into its magnificent spire, even beyond the great group of bells that captivate the soul with their wonderful sweetness and melody. At a height of four hundred feet, the vast prospect spread out before one is indescribably beautiful. This Cathedral, the largest and handsomest Gothic church in the Netherlands, was begun in 1352, but was not completed until about 1616. The chimes consist of ninety-nine bells, the smallest of which is only fifteen inches in circumference, while the largest weighs eight tons. The chimes are rung every fifteen minutes, a musical reminder that the soul of man, no matter what his occupation, should be elevated by continual aspiration toward the living God. Oh, these beautiful chimes! What wondrous harmony they peal forth, and what a multitude of loving

thoughts they gather up and waft hourly to the very gates of heaven!

A stranger in the town, and a traveller, made the remark to me that these bells must be very annoying, ringing at such short intervals, and especially at night. "It is worse than a swarm of mosquitoes," he said, "for one can escape the attentions of these insects by placing a net over his couch, but the piercing sounds of these monstrous bells penetrate one like the chill of zero weather." This reminded me of a man who shared our compartment in one of the French railway cars, who interrupted my enthusiastic remarks on Westminster Abbey, its exquisite associations, and the sacred atmosphere which impressed all who came within its hallowed walls, by an eager question regarding the luncheon to be served an hour later.

The interior of the Cathedral impresses one with its grand simplicity, and the long vistas of its six aisles present a fine effect. Here is Rubens' famous masterpiece, the Descent from the Cross, and his earlier painting, the Elevation of the Cross, both magnificent works, remarkable for the easy and natural attitudes of the figures. The high altarpiece is an Assumption by Rubens, in which the Virgin is pictured in the clouds surrounded by a heavenly choir, with the apostles and other figures below.

There are many other paintings here; also stained glass windows, both ancient and modern. The tower is an open structure of beautiful and elaborate design, from which lovely views may be seen during the journey to its summit.

Another interesting landmark is the "Steen" originally forming part of the Castle of Antwerp, but in 1549 Charles V. made it over to the burghers of Antwerp. It was afterward the seat of the Spanish Inquisition. It is now occupied by the Museum van Oudheden, a collection of ancient and curious relics from the Roman times till the eighteenth century. Within this building one may view the identical instruments of torture so mercilessly used by the Spanish inquisitors in the name of religion. It would not be difficult to photograph these diabolical inventions, for many of them are quite free from the surrounding objects, and not encased. In this collection we see also specimens of antique furniture, and a variety of ornaments, coins, costumes, tapestry curtains, ancient prints and engravings, and many other objects well worthy of observation.

In Antwerp we have the opportunity of seeing some exquisite laces and embroideries. A visit to one of the many establishments here cannot fail to interest the stranger. At one of the shops we are conducted to a room in which a dozen girls are at work upon a delicate piece of lace. They have been engaged upon this masterpiece for about three months, and the proprietor tells us that as much more time will be required to finish it. The design is a huge web, in the centre of which is the sly spider

apparently watching the victims who have strayed beyond the line of safety. A number of handsome and rare specimens of this valuable handwork are exhibited in the shop window, and one's desire to possess them may be satisfied by a moderate expenditure of money.

Antwerp is the city of Rubens. We find his tomb in the beautiful church of St. Jacques, rich in carvings and noble paintings, not far from the fine altarpiece painted by his hand. He lies in the Rubens Chapel, and here too are monuments of two of his descendants. The house in which the illustrious artist died stands in a street named for him, and in the Place Verte, formerly the churchyard of the Cathedral, stands a bronze statue of Rubens, thirteen feet in height upon a pedestal twenty feet high. At the feet of the master lie scrolls and books, also brushes, palette and hat; allusions to the talented diplomatist and statesman, as well as to the painter.

One need not feel alarmed as to his expenses in this charming old town, for comfortable accommodations and good board may be enjoyed at less than moderate rates. I love this dear city, not only for its magnificent Cathedral, its rare paintings, its picturesque surroundings; but also for the remarkable hospitality of its people, their genial manner, their smiling faces. Their candor and honesty win the admiration and the heart of the tourist, and the stranger is quickly at home, and able to enjoy most fully the many attractions which the place affords.

[Illustration: "The place is intersected everywhere by canals." (_See page 113._)]

But the time has come to bid it adieu; we take the train and in two hours find ourselves in the ever quaint and picturesque town of Rotterdam, fitly named the "City of Windmills."

Comfortable quarters may be found here at the Maas Hotel. Rotterdam, whose population is something over two hundred thousand, is the second city in commercial importance in Holland. Among its numerous attractions are art galleries, parks, gardens, the markets, bridges and canals, without mentioning the many windmills which wave their arms in blessing over the city. The place is intersected everywhere by canals, all deep enough for the passage of heavily laden ships, and with such names as the Oude Haven, Scheepmakershaven, Leuvehaven, Nieuwe Haven, Wynhaven, Blaak, and Haringvliet.

Our hotel is situated upon the bank of the Maas River, and our windows overlook this body of water, which is in reality a highway. Instead of wagons drawn by strong muscular horses, however, barges, schooners, sail boats, and every kind of small craft, overflowing with fruits, vegetables and other produce, traverse the river as well as the canals. Looking over these watery roads, the mind is confused by the hundreds of

boats which seem inextricably mingled in one great mass, and appear to form a blockade as far as the eye can reach. Rotterdam might fitly add to its title of "City of Windmills," that of the "City of Canals." Houses, stores and other buildings are built directly upon the banks, and in fact, the foundations of these form the sides of the canals. In many cases the balconies of residences overhang the water, and passages are made beneath, by means of which produce, freight and other articles are conveyed to and from the buildings by boats, much as the wagons deliver goods in our cities from the streets to the houses.

All these novel sights impress the visitor with the great difference between the manners and customs of this nation and our own; the result of the peculiar environment of the two countries. A stroll about the city affords abundant opportunity for interesting observations. Here one sees hundreds of Dutch women in their costly headgear of gold and silver, heirlooms of many generations. These head ornaments sometimes cover the entire scalp, and have curious filigree additions extending over the ears and temples. The head is first covered with a scrupulously clean and beautiful lace cap, upon which the gold or silver ornament is placed. These heirlooms are valued beyond all price, and I have handled some which are two hundred years old, and which are held as sacred charges to be transmitted to posterity.

As we traverse the streets of this quaint city, we feel indeed that fashion has stood still here for many years. The custom is universal throughout Holland for the natives of the different provinces, as Volendam, Marken, Brock, etc., to wear in public, and especially when travelling, the costume peculiar to their own province, and it is by no means uncommon to see many odd and quaintly dressed women in close proximity to one another, each one representing by some peculiarity, a different province or section of the country. For instance; when I see the skirt of blue homespun made in full folds, and worn with a jacket of striped red and white, and the peaked bonnet trimmed with red and white tape, I know that the wearer is a native of the island of Marken. These various costumes, all gay and picturesque, are the source of great pleasure to the stranger, and add new life and interest to his travels in this country.

Here also we notice the huge, powerful draught horses, with their massive hoofs and shaggy legs, drawing strange looking wagons laden with curious boxes and furniture. The wooden shoes worn by the working classes also attract our attention and many other novel sights and customs give us the impression that we have chartered one of Jules Verne's original conveyances and wandered off to a country not located on this earthly planet.

Wishing to purchase some bonbons, we enter a candy shop and ask the fair maid behind the counter to put up a pound of this confection: our amazement is great when she replies that this form of sweetmeat is not

to be found in Rotterdam. "What," I exclaim, "no sweets for the sweet girls of Holland?" "No, only chocolate candy." And this indeed is the only kind of bonbon to be had in Rotterdam. The sweet chocolate is moulded into various shapes. It is delicious, excelling in purity and flavor that which is made in any other part of the world.

[Illustration: "In many cases the balconies of residences overhang the water." (_ See page 114._)]

Our guide is very attentive and energetic; and anxious to show us everything of interest about the town, he conducts us through the numerous market-places. At one of these some amusement is excited by my photographs and sketches of the market people and the buyers. The market man stands beside his wares with a happy, good-natured face that seems to say that the cares and worries of this world affect him not at all. The whole scene is like some vividly colored picture, and I think as I look upon it that this life bears with it pleasures of which we of the outside world know nothing. Apparently the people of this country possess the rare blessing of contentment with the lot which God has bestowed upon them.

An old man and woman are particularly anxious for me to photograph their daughter, who they assure me is the belle of the market. This assertion, I think, may be true without much compliment to the girl, for a homelier set of human beings it would not be easy to find. After some preliminaries relating to posing and keeping back the curious country people who crowd closely around me and the camera, I finally succeed in making a good picture of the Belle of the Rotterdam Market, with her father and mother on either side. They are all as proud as Punch of this performance, and seem quite "set up" by the occasion.

One day being near to a manufacturer of the wooden shoes worn by the peasants, our party of four slips within the shop, and are fitted after trying on at least a dozen pairs, to the apparent delight of Meinherr. It is necessary to wear a heavy woollen stocking to secure comfort in these shoes. The ordinary American stocking would soon be rubbed into holes by the hard surface of the shoe. Indeed it is quite a feat to be able to walk rapidly and gracefully in this clumsy footwear.

Over many of the watery streets of the city drawbridges are built, which are opened at intervals to allow the streams of boats to pass. The incessant blowing of a trumpet or horn similar to that of the tally-ho notifies the watchman of the approach of boats. This sound may be heard at all hours of the day or night in any part of the city, and is at first, especially at night, rather disturbing to the stranger, but like other annoyances which are inevitable, the exercise of a little patience and endurance will enable one to eventually like the trumpet, or else to become as deaf to them as old "Dame Eleanor Spearing."

I know of no place in which the lover of the antique, whether he is a collector of ancient coins, jewels, china, furniture, or a seeker after rare curios and relics, can experience greater delight than in this old city of Rotterdam. Here are hundreds of shops, whose proprietors devote their whole lives to the accumulation of such objects, and it is needless to say that their stock is rich and unique, and possesses abundant variety. We visit a number of these establishments, and I succeed in gathering up a large assortment of old swords which please my fancy. One of these is said to have been owned by Christopher Columbus(?). The shopkeeper vouches for the truth of the statement, and as I am willing to believe it, in the absence of proof to the contrary, I label it as the sword of the great navigator who added a new hemisphere to our globe. The remaining swords have been the personal property of lords, generals or other warlike celebrities, and again I take comfort in the thought that if the records are not truthful, it is a minor consideration when taking into account the moderate prices which I have paid for the articles.

The artist will find in Rotterdam a wealth of material both for figure subjects, and odd and picturesque bits of landscape. Here too are wonderful interiors, with all the quaint associations of a bygone age. Here are scenes on the canals, the bridges, and the ever changing life on the river. By all means visit Rotterdam if you desire original studies for your sketch book.

From: The Project Gutenberg EBook of Odd Bits of Travel with Brush and Camera, by Charles M. Taylor, Jr.

A CLOUDLESS DAY.

Sherwood Forest.--Nottingham.--Story of the Wise Men of Gotham.

"Have stood by the graves of Wordsworth and Coleridge. The trees were green and cool; the Rotha rippled beside the poets' resting-place, and Helvellyn and Catchedicam in the distance rose in the calm, bright air. Beautiful indeed are these mountains in midsummer. The whole Lake region is beautiful--beautiful!"

Such was the brief entry Wyllys Wynn made in the journal in his guide-book, on returning from the English Lakes.

"There is a touching story associated with Helvellyn," said Wyllys to Master Lewis, as the boys were returning from the Lakes, "that Scott has told in very musical verse. It is of a little dog that watched beside the dead body of his master for several months, and was found guarding the bones. Will you not relate it to us?"

"Wordsworth and Scott, I think," said Master Lewis, "both tell the story in verse.

"About the year 1805 there dwelt in the district a young man of elegant tastes, who loved to explore these mountain regions. He was well known for his literary attainments, and greatly beloved for his gentle and amiable manners.

"He used to make frequent excursions among the wild mountains, and would spend whole days feasting his eye on the exhaustless beauties they afforded. He was always attended by a little terrier dog, to which he was greatly attached, and which was ever on the alert to do his master's bidding. Scott, in his ballad, calls the young man the Wanderer, and so I will call him now.

"One spring day, when the streams were swollen, and the mountains were all alive with waterfalls, birds, and flowers, the Wanderer set out on an excursion that promised unusual attractions, attended by his little favorite. He penetrated too far, or remained too long; night probably overtook him, and he lost his way. He fell from a precipice, and was dashed in pieces. For several months the little dog watched by the remains of his beloved master, only leaving them, it is supposed, to obtain necessary food. The remains of the Wanderer were found during the following summer by a party of excursionists, and, when discovered, the terrier was guarding them with pitying care.

"Sir Walter Scott, in company with Wordsworth, ascended Helvellyn during the following autumn, and visited the spot where the Wanderer

died. The well-known ballad, one of the most pathetic of Scott's poetical compositions, was the result of this excursion.

"I climbed the dark brow of the mighty Helvellyn,
Lakes and mountains beneath me gleamed misty and wide,
All was still, save by fits, when the eagle was yelling,
And starting around me the echoes replied.
On the right Striden-edge round the Red-tarn was bending,
And Catchedicam its left verge was defending,
One huge, nameless rock in the front was ascending,
When I marked the sad spot where the Wanderer had died."

The Class stopped at Sheffield, and thence began their first experience of English stage-coaching to the old town of Mansfield. They entered the latter upon a market-day, and found the streets full of empty carts, cattle, and rustic people, presenting a scene of truly ancient simplicity. Mansfield is still a miller's town, and must present nearly the same appearance as in the days of Henry II., who, according to the old ballad, was lost in the forests near the place. The forests, however, have changed: little remains of them but a heath, traversed by wild and romantic roads. Here and there a great tree, like a forest lord, may be seen, to remind one of the kingly hunting days.

Leaving Mansfield for Sherwood Forest, strange houses by the wayside, excavated in limestone and recalling the supposed age of the cave-dwellers, as in an unexpected picture, much excited the boys' curiosity.

Sherwood Forest, or as much of it as remains, is twenty-five miles long and about eight broad. The new growth of trees is very fine; but it is the remains of the grand old oaks that attract the tourist and summer wanderer. The wood has a ground-work of exhaustless ferns, the delicate birches flutter in the warm winds, their peculiar shade contrasting with the greenery around them. Here and there oaks of different ages and altitudes rise gray, gnarled, and almost leafless,--oaks on which a thousand tempests have beaten, and around which ten thousand storms have blown. In Henry II.'s time not only Nottingham, but the whole of England, was covered with oaks.

[Illustration: SHAMBLE OAK.]

Tommy Toby was very urgent to visit some of the old historic oaks of Sherwood, especially such as are associated with quaint stories and tragic histories.

Procuring a guide, the Class went first to see Shamble Oak. Think of it: in the main circuit it is thirty-four feet! It is called Shamble Oak because a butcher once used its hollow trunk to conceal stolen

sheep. He was hung on an oak.

The guide next took the boys to a dreamy old place called Welbeck Park, to see the Greendale Oak, supposed to be seven hundred years old, and which has a circumference of more than thirty-five feet!

"It looks as though it had the rheumatism," said Tommy. "With all of its crutches and canes it will not live many years longer. Do you think it will?"

"I think it likely to outlive all of us," said the guide. "More than one hundred and fifty years ago an arch was cut in this tree, and a lord rode through it on his wedding day. It was very, very old then; but the lord is gone, and the oak lives."

[Illustration: GREENDALE OAK.]

The guide procured for the party a vehicle, and drove to Parliament Oak, under which it is said that Edward I. held a Parliament in 1290. The tree still furnishes green boughs. Its girth is about twenty-nine feet.

Newstead Abbey, the home of Lord Byron, forms a part of the old forest of Sherwood, and is but a short distance from Mansfield. It was founded by Henry II., and presents one of the picturesque and interesting ruins in this part of England.

"You will not be allowed to visit the Abbey," said the guide. "The rooms of Lord Byron remain just as he left them; his bedstead, with gilded coronets, his pictures, portraits of friends, writing-table, and all; but it is private property, and visitors are not allowed."

"The Abbey was built by Henry as one of the many peace offerings which he made for the murder of Thomas à Becket," said Master Lewis. "You remember the story?"

[Illustration: PARLIAMENT OAK.]

"Yes," said Wyllys Wynn. "Thomas à Becket claimed that the power of the clergy was superior to the power of the king, and Henry pronounced him a traitor. He was killed at the altar by a party of conspirators, whose deed had the supposed sanction of the king. Henry did penance at Thomas à Becket's tomb."

"He stripped his back, and allowed the monks to whip him, did he not?" said Tommy. "I remember the picture of it in my history."

Distant views of Newstead, so full of strange memories and fantastic histories, were all the Class could obtain. The ruin looked down upon

the charming old Nottinghamshire woodlands like a picture of the past, and the spirit of romance and poetry seemed to linger around it still.

[Illustration: MORTIMER'S HOLE.]

Going next to the fine old town of Nottingham, almost the first thing which the boys desired to see was Mortimer's Hole. This is a passage through a sand-rock, more than three hundred feet in length. Through this passage young Edward entered Nottingham Castle by night, and thus surprised and captured Mortimer (Earl of March). The wicked Earl was conveyed by the same passage out of the castle so secretly that the guards were not aware that it had been entered.

In the evening spent at Nottingham, Tommy Toby was asked about his story of which he had spoken in connection with the place.

[Illustration: MURDER OF THOMAS À BECKET.]

"It is not a story of Nottingham, but of Gotham, near Nottingham. It is about the Wise Men."

"Who went to sea in a bowl?" asked Frank.

"No, they were much wiser than that. I will try to tell it in the way Master Lewis tells his stories: in the rather _decorated_ style."

"I hope you will always have as nice a sense of honor as you show now," said Master Lewis, "whenever you make the slightest change from plain truth to parable. You have a tact for story-telling, for one so young; and you studied up the story of 'The Frolicsome Duke,' which you told the Club, in a manner that quite surprised us. I hope this story will prove as entertaining."

THE STORY OF THE WISE MEN OF GOTHAM.

"More than six hundred and fifty years ago, there reigned in England a king, named John. They called him _Sansterre_ or Lackland, for, unlike his brothers, he had received from his father no fiefs.

"He was the son of Henry Plantagenet, a good king, as kings went in those rude times, who governed England for thirty-four years.

"His mother was Eleanora of Aquitaine, who was, in her day, the prettiest girl in France. But she was a wilful little woman and full of craft. She married the French king first, but, not liking him on account of his monkish ways, she procured a divorce, and told Henry Plantagenet, who was young and handsome and gay, that she would like

to marry him. He accepted the proposal, because the union would add to his dominions several provinces. Henry loved Rosamond Clifford,--'Fair Rosamond,'--whom he had met in the valley of the Wye, and who was the prettiest girl in all the world.

"The marriage proved an unhappy one. Henry soon discovered what a wily, wilful little woman she was; he tried to curb her, and a terrible time he had.

"Richard succeeded his father. It was he who made the grandest crusade of the Middle Ages; who was married at Cyprus in flower-time; who fought with noble Saladin at Acre and Jaffa; who was obliged to sail away from the Holy Land; who looked back from his beautiful ship on the unconquered coast with regret; who was shipwrecked and cast upon a hostile coast; and who was discovered, when imprisoned in a gloomy old castle on the Danube, by the harp of Blondel the Troubadour.

"Then came John, in whose veins flowed the worst blood of King Henry's family. Prince Arthur, Geoffrey's son, had the best claim to the crown, but somehow John got himself crowned, and he began to reign so terribly that the hearts of the barons quaked within them; and so, for a time, he silenced all opposition. He was as cunning as bad Queen Eleanor, and he loved to make mischief as well. He would order that a man should be killed, apparently with as little conscience as he would have ordered a butcher to slay a sheep. Most bad kings have been notable for some good qualities; King John, so far as I know, had none.

"In Nottinghamshire there is an old town, removed from the great centres of life and activity, called Gotham. The inhabitants were of good Saxon stock, and they hated the whole race of Norman Plantagenets. These people had learned something of liberty from bold Robin Hood, 'all under the greenwood tree.'

"One day there came a report to Old Gotham that King John was making a progress, and would pass through the town. Now it was an old custom in feudal times that the course that a king took, in passing for the first time through a district or a shire, should become ever after a public highway. The people of Gotham wanted no public highway to their town, no avenue that would open their retreat to the Normans, and put them more easily in the power of brutal kings. And they hated John. So they held a council, and resolved that the feet of John Lackland, the murderer, should never dishonor the town of Gotham.

[Illustration: RICHARD'S FAREWELL TO THE HOLY LAND.]

"But the people understood that it would be a foolhardy work to oppose the progress of the king openly. They must rely upon their wits. The men decided to go in a body and fell large trees across a certain

upland, over which the royal party must pass to enter the town. This they did, making a barrier through which mounted horsemen would find it difficult to break, and which would compel a party like the king's to turn off by another way.

"When King John came to the eminence, and found his progress arrested, he was very angry, and, finding a couple of rustics near the place, he demanded of them who had made the barrier.

"The people of Gotham,' answered one of the rustics.

"Go you to Gotham,' said the king, 'and tell the people from me, that as soon as I return to camp I will send a troop to cut off their noses.'

"The two rustics ran off, terribly frightened, and reported the cheerful intelligence at Gotham. Oh, then there were stirring times in that old town! The people had no wish to receive a kingly decoration in that way.

"What was to be done?

"They met for consultation.

"Now there were wise men in Gotham, and, when the convention met, these wise men expressed their opinions not only on the nose question, but on public affairs in general. After a long deliberation, one of these wise men, whom I will call Fitz Peter, said: 'Our wits have thus far prevented King John from setting foot in our town, and our wits are able to save our noses.' This opinion was received with great satisfaction.

"But how should they accomplish the end?

"Now chief among the wise men of Gotham was one whom I will call Leofric. He at last stood up with a very knowing look, and said: 'I have heard of many people who were punished for being wise, but I never heard of a person who was punished for being a fool. When the king's troops come, let us each imitate a safe example, and act like a fool.'

"At this the people shouted. So they decided to rely on their wits for the safety of their noses, and to act like fools.

"One morning, very early, as a party of horsemen were leaving the town for hunting, a troop appeared, with a fierce sheriff at their head.

"The bowmen were terribly scared, and the question passed around as to what they should do. They hit upon a plan, and threw away their

hunting-gear. When the sheriff came up, he found the old men rolling great stones up the hill, and the young men bending over and grunting as if they were in great distress.

"What are you doing?" demanded the sheriff of one of the old men who was tugging away at a stone.

"We are rolling stones up hill for day."

"You old fool!" said the sheriff. "Go home and go to bed, and day will come itself."

"Why," returned the man, as though greatly astonished, "I never thought of that. How wise you be! You are the wisest man I ever did see!"

"And what are you doing?" asked the sheriff, of one of the young men.

"We do the grunting," was the prompt reply.

"The old men do the lifting, and the young men do the grunting!" exclaimed the sheriff. "Well," he added, in sudden good-humor, "that is the way the world goes everywhere!" And he galloped away, leaving the men unharmed.

"The sheriff next met four old women, with brooms on their shoulders.

"Whither away?" asked the sheriff.

"To the priest's, to be married," said they all.

"To the priest's, to be married?"

"We go every morning to be married," answered one of the old crones, "and we have been for the last forty years!"

"Then why are you not married?"

"The priest says that we do not bring the right thing. We carry something new every morning."

"But why do you not take a man?"

"A MAN!" exclaimed the old woman, leaping straight into the air. "A MAN? I never thought of that! How wise you be! Why, you are the wisest man that I ever did see!"

[Illustration: LIMESTONE DWELLINGS.]

"The sheriff next met some men who had started on a journey, each of whom carried on his back a door.

"'Why do you carry that door?' asked the sheriff of one of the travellers.

"'Left my money at home.'

"'Then why not leave the door at home too?'

"'Afraid of thieves.'

"'Afraid of thieves? Then leave your door at home to protect your money.'

"'They can't break in, because, you see, I've got the door.'

"'Leave your door at home, and take your money with you.'

"'I never thought of that. How wise you be! You are the wisest man that I ever did see!'

"The sheriff let the travellers pass on unmolested.

"'The people are all fools here,' he said.

"'It would be too bad to harm such simple people,' said his comrades.

"'Fools all,' said the sheriff.

"'Fools all,' said the horsemen.

"'Let us go back,' said the sheriff, 'and report to the king that the people in Gotham are fools.'

"'Right,' said the men.

"So they returned to the king, and reported that Gotham was a place of fools. And from these circumstances, or incidents like these, if I may believe an old tale, the men of that place were called, in derision, 'The Wise Men of Gotham,' from that day."

from:

Project Gutenberg's Zigzag Journeys in Europe, by Hezekiah Butterworth

386. =Cucumbers with Cream.= Peel half a dozen cucumbers, cut them in medium-sized square pieces, soak them for two hours in some vinegar, and a pinch of salt. Turn them over from time to time, drain them, and dry them on a cloth, pressing the moisture from them. Put them in a saucepan on the fire, with an ounce of butter, half a pint of consommé (stock, Art. 1), several branches of parsley, inclosing two cloves, two branches of thyme, a clove of garlic, and tie all together, add a pinch of salt. When they are cooked, drain them, add them to half a pint of béchamel sauce (Art. 83), the juice of half a lemon, a tablespoonful of chopped parsley, and serve very hot.

387. =Lentils à la Maître d'Hôtel.= Wash three pints of lentils, put them in a saucepan with two quarts of water and a pinch of salt. Boil them very slowly for an hour, or until perfectly tender, then drain them, put them in a saucepan on the fire for a moment, with four ounces of butter, a little salt, a pinch of pepper, nutmeg, and a tablespoonful of chopped parsley. Remove your saucepan from the fire, mix the yolks of two eggs in two tablespoonfuls of water, add them to your lentils, mixing all well together, and serve.

462. =Poached Eggs with Asparagus.= Cut off the green ends, about half an inch in length, of two bunches of asparagus; wash them, then boil them about fifteen minutes in two quarts of boiling water and a pinch of salt; if perfectly tender, drain them and mix them with a gill of sauce Allemande (Art. 81) and a pinch of sugar. Poach eight eggs, place them on top of your asparagus, and serve.

468. =Eggs à la Jardinière.= Peel and cut in small pieces two onions, which put in a saucepan on a gentle fire, with two ounces of butter, a little salt and pepper; when beginning to color, mix well with them a glass of cream, which boil for a few moments and allow to become half cold; then beat up well with the foregoing ingredient six eggs. Pour all together on a dish, and send to a moderate oven for about six or seven minutes, and, when well colored on top, serve.

551. =Apple Tart.= Peel two dozen apples, which put in a saucepan with two tablespoonfuls of water and a little grated lemon-peel; stew them until soft, then add three ounces of sugar, and stir with a wooden spoon five minutes; then let them become cold. Take some pâte brisée (Art. 285), roll it out thin, and with it line a pie-dish large enough to contain your apples, which place in the dish. Roll out some more paste very thin, sprinkle it with flour, double it, cut it in strips a quarter of an inch wide, moisten the edges of your tart, and place the strips on top of your apples, a small space between each, fasten the ends to the edge of your dish, and brush the strips lightly with water; place an equal quantity of strips across and on top of the others, making a sort of lattice-work; brush them over with beaten egg, and send the tart to a hot oven; when three quarters done, remove it, brush

it over with a little melted currant jelly; return it to the oven until thoroughly done both underneath and on top.

557. =Gâteau Fourré aux Amandes.= Put four ounces of almonds in boiling water, and remove the skins. Pound the almonds to a paste, with which mix thoroughly four ounces of sugar, an ounce of butter, the yolks of two eggs, and half a sherry-glass of rum. Take half a pound of puff paste (Art. 284), roll it a quarter of an inch thick, and, with a sufficient quantity, line a shallow pie-dish. Moisten the edge of your paste, fill the pie-dish with your mixture of almonds, make a border with the rest of your paste around the edge of your dish, then, with the point of a knife, trace some fanciful design on the top, brush it over with beaten egg, send to a hot oven for about forty-five minutes, and, if well done underneath, sprinkle some powdered sugar on top, and, when melted, remove from the oven and serve. You may also serve this cold.

286. =Bouchées de Salpicon.= Take half a pound of puff paste, and, after having given it six turns, roll it out half an inch thick, cut it out in ten rounds, with a muffin-ring or a mold for the purpose. Mark lightly in the center of each, with the point of a knife, a very small round. Brush them (with a camel's-hair brush) in beaten egg, put them on a pan, send them to a very hot oven, and watch them carefully so that they do not color too much on the outside before the inside is done. This paste should rise at least two inches. When the bouchées are thoroughly done inside, and colored bright yellow on the outside, take them out of the oven, remove the small rounds in the center which you have marked out, and also enough paste from the inside to make space for the following mixture: Put half a pint of Spanish sauce (Art. 80), with a glass of sherry, in a saucepan on the fire, boil it ten minutes, then add eight mushrooms, four chickens' livers, which you have previously blanched in boiling water ten minutes, the breast of a cold chicken, some cold smoked tongue, and two truffles, all cut in small pieces. When hot, fill your bouchées, place the small covers on top of each, and serve. Instead of Spanish sauce, Allemande sauce (Art. 81) is often preferred. You may also add four ounces of chicken farce (Art. 11), which form into small balls, and poach in boiling water. Instead of chicken, you may substitute sweetbreads; or you may fill the bouchées with oysters, to which you have added an Allemande sauce and some mushrooms cut in small pieces.

From: Project Gutenberg's French Dishes for American Tables, by Pierre Caron

ROMANTIC PAINTING

I

When we come to Scott after Fielding, says Mr. Stevenson, "we become suddenly conscious of the background." The remark contains an admirable characterization of romanticism; as distinguished from classicism, romanticism is consciousness of the background. With Gros, Géricault, Paul Huet, Michel, Delacroix, French painting ceased to be abstract and impersonal. Instead of continuing the classic detachment, it became interested, curious, and catholic. It broadened its range immensely, and created its effect by observing the relations of its objects to their environment, of its figures to the landscape, of its subjects to their suggestions even in other spheres of thought; Delacroix, Marilhat, Decamps, Fromentin, in painting the aspect of Orientalism, suggested, one may almost say, its sociology. For the abstractions of classicism, its formula, its fastidious system of arriving at perfection by exclusions and sacrifices, it substituted an enthusiasm for the concrete and the actual; it revelled in natural phenomena. Gautier was never more definitely the exponent of romanticism than in saying "I am a man for whom the visible world exists." To lines and curves and masses and their relations in composition, succeeds as material for inspiration and reproduction the varied spectacle of the external world. With the early romanticists it may be said that for the first time the external world "swims into" the painter's "ken." But, above all, in them the element of personality first appears in French painting with anything like general acceptance and as the characteristic of a group, a school, rather than as an isolated exception here and there, such as Claude or Chardin. The "point of view" takes the place of conformity to a standard. The painter expresses himself instead of endeavoring to realize an extraneous and impersonal ideal. What he himself personally thinks, how he himself personally feels, is what we read in his works.

It is true that, rightly understood, the romantic epoch is a period of evolution, and orderly evolution at that, if we look below the surface, rather than of systematic defiance and revolt. It is true that it recast rather than repudiated its inheritance of tradition. Nevertheless there has never been a time when the individual felt himself so free, when every man of any original genius felt so keenly the exhilaration of independence, when the "schools" of painting exercised less tyranny and, indeed, counted for so little. If it be exact to speak of the "romantic school" at all, it should be borne in mind that its adherents were men of the most marked and diverse individualities ever grouped under one standard. The impressionists, perhaps, apart, individuality is often spoken of as the essential characteristic of the painters of the present day. But beside the outburst of individuality at the beginning

of the romantic epoch, much of the painting of the present day seems both monotonous and eccentric--the variation of its essential monotony, that is to say, being somewhat labored and express in comparison with the spontaneous multifariousness of the epoch of Delacroix and Decamps. In the decade between 1820 and 1830, at all events, notwithstanding the strength of the academic tradition, painting was free from the thralldom of system, and the imagination of its practitioners was not challenged and circumscribed by the criticism that is based upon science. Not only in the painter's freedom in his choice of subject, but in his way of treating it, in the way in which he "takes it," is the revolution--or, as I should be inclined to say, rather, the evolution--shown. And as what we mean by personality is, in general, made up far more of emotion than of mind--there being room for infinitely more variety in feeling than in mental processes among intelligent agents--it is natural to find the French romantic painters giving, by contrast with their predecessors, such free swing to personal feeling that we may almost sum up the origin of the romantic movement in French painting in saying that it was an ebullition of emancipated emotion. And, to go a step farther, we may say that, as nothing is so essential to poetry as feeling, we meet now for the first time with the poetic element as an inspiring motive and controlling force.

The romantic painters were, however, by no means merely emotional. They were mainly imaginative. And in painting, as in literature, the great change wrought by romanticism consisted in stimulating the imagination instead of merely satisfying the sense and the intellect. The main idea ceased to be as obviously accentuated, and its natural surroundings were given their natural place; there was less direct statement and more suggestion; the artist's effort was expended rather upon perfecting the _ensemble_, noting relations, taking in a larger circle; a suggested complexity of moral elements took the place of the old simplicity, whose multifariousness was almost wholly pictorial. Instead of a landscape as a tapestry background to a Holy Family, and having no pertinence but an artistic one, we have Corot's "Orpheus."

II

Géricault and Delacroix are the great names inscribed at the head of the romantic roll. They will remain there. And the distinction is theirs not as awarded by the historical estimate; it is personal. In the case of Géricault perhaps one thinks a little of "the man and the moment" theory. He was, it is true, the first romantic painter--at any rate the first notable romantic painter. His struggles, his steadfastness, his success--pathetically posthumous--have given him an honorable eminence. His example of force and freedom exerted an influence that has been traced not only in the work of Delacroix, his immediate inheritor, but in that of the sculptor Rude, and even as far as that of Millet--to all outward appearance so different in inspiration from that of his own

tumultuous and dramatic genius. And as of late years we look on the stages of any evolution as less dependent on individuals than we used to, doubtless just as Luther was confirmed and supported on his way to the Council at Worms by the people calling on him from the house-tops not to deny the truth, Géricault was sustained and stimulated in the face of official obloquy by a more or less considerable æsthetic movement of which he was really but the leader and exponent. But his fame is not dependent upon his revolt against the Institute, his influence upon his successors, or his incarnation of an æsthetic movement. It rests on his individual accomplishment, his personal value, the abiding interest of his pictures. "The Raft of the Medusa" will remain an admirable and moving creation, a masterpiece of dramatic vigor and vivid characterization, of wide and deep human interest and truly panoramic grandeur, long after its contemporary interest and historic importance have ceased to be thought of except by the æsthetic antiquarian. "The Wounded Cuirassier" and the "Chasseur of the Guard" are not documents of æsthetic history, but noble expressions of artistic sapience and personal feeling.

What, I think, is the notable thing about both Géricault and Delacroix, however, as exponents, as the initiators, of romanticism, is the way in which they restrained the impetuous temperament they share within the confines of a truly classic reserve. Closely considered, they are not the revolutionists they seemed to the official classicism of their day. Not only do they not base their true claims to enduring fame upon a spirit of revolt against official and academic art--a spirit essentially negative and nugatory, and never the inspiration of anything permanently puissant and attractive--but, compared with their successors of the present day, in whose works individual preference and predilection seem to have a swing whose very freedom and irresponsible audacity extort admiration--compared with the confident temerariousness of what is known as modernité, their self-possession and sobriety seem their most noteworthy characteristics. Compared with the "Bar at the Folies-Bergère," either the "Raft of the Medusa" or the "Convulsionists of Tangiers" is a classic production. And the difference is not at all due to the forty years' accretion of Protestantism which Manet represents as compared with the early romanticists. It is due to a complete difference in attitude. Géricault imbued himself with the inspiration of the Louvre. Delacroix is said always to have made a sketch from the old masters or the antique a preliminary to his own daily work. So far from flaunting tradition, they may be said to have, in their own view, restored it; so far from posing as apostles of innovation, they may almost be accused of "harking back"--of steeping themselves in what to them seemed best and finest and most authoritative in art, instead of giving a free rein to their own unregulated emotions and conceptions.

Géricault died early and left but a meagre product. Delacroix is par excellence the representative of the romantic epoch. And both by the

mass and the quality of his work he forms a true connecting link between the classic epoch and the modern--in somewhat the same way as Prudhon does, though more explicitly and on the other side of the line of division. He represents culture--he knows art as well as he loves nature. He has a feeling for what is beautiful as well as a knowledge of what is true. He is pre-eminently and primarily a colorist--he is, in fact, the introducer of color as a distinct element in French painting after the pale and bleak reaction from the Louis Quinze decorativeness. His color, too, is not merely the prismatic coloration of what had theretofore been mere chiaro-oscuro; it is original and personal to such a degree that it has never been successfully imitated since his day. Withal, it is apparently simplicity itself. Its hues are apparently the primary ones, in the main. It depends upon no subtleties and refinements of tints for its effectiveness. It is significant that the absorbed and affected Rossetti did not like it; it is too frank and clear and open, and shows too little evidence of the morbid brooding and hysterical forcing of an arbitrary and esoteric note dear to the English pre-Raphaelites. It attests a delight in color, not a fondness for certain colors, hues, tints--a difference perfectly appreciable to either an unsophisticated or an educated sense. It has a solidity and strength of range and vibration combined with a subtle sensitiveness, and, as a result of the fusion of the two, a certain splendor that recalls Saracenic decoration. And with this mastery of color is united a combined firmness and expressiveness of design that makes Delacroix unique by emphasizing his truly classic subordination of informing enthusiasm to a severe and clearly perceived ideal--an ideal in a sense exterior to his purely personal expression. In a word, his chief characteristic--and it is a supremely significant trait in the representative painter of romanticism--is a poetic imagination tempered and trained by culture and refinement. When his audacities and enthusiasms are thought of, the directions in his will for his tomb should be remembered too: "Il n'y sera placé ni emblème, ni buste, ni statue; mon tombeau sera copié très exactement sur l'antique, ou Vignoles ou Palladio, avec des saillies très prononcées, contrairement à tout ce qui se fait aujourd'hui en architecture." "Let there be neither emblem, bust, nor statue on my tomb, which shall be copied very scrupulously after the antique, either Vignola or Palladio, with prominent projections, contrary to everything done to-day in architecture." In a sense all Delacroix is in these words.

III

Delacroix's color deepens into an almost musical intensity occasionally in Decamps, whose oriental landscapes and figures, far less important intellectually, far less _magistrales_ in conception, have at times, one may say perhaps without being too fanciful, a truly symphonic quality that renders them unique. "The Suicide" is like a chord on a violin. But it is when we come to speak of the "Fontainebleau Group," in especial, I

think, that the æsthetic susceptibility characteristic of the latter half of the nineteenth century feels, to borrow M. Taine's introduction to his lectures on "The Ideal in Art," that the subject is one only to be treated in poetry.

Of the noblest of all so-called "schools," Millet is perhaps the most popular member. His popularity is in great part, certainly, due to his literary side, to the sentiment which pervades, which drenches, one may say, all his later work--his work after he had, on overhearing himself characterized as a painter of naked women, betaken himself to his true subject, the French peasant. A literary, and a very powerful literary side, Millet undoubtedly has; and instead of being a weakness in him it is a power. His sentimental appeal is far from being surplusage, but, as is not I think popularly appreciated, it is subordinate, and the fact of its subordination gives it what potency it has. It is idle to deny this potency, for his portrayal of the French peasant in his varied aspects has probably been as efficient a characterization as that of George Sand herself. But, if a moral instead of an æsthetic effect had been Millet's chief intention, we may be sure that it would have been made far less incisively than it has been. Compare, for example, his peasant pictures with those of the almost purely literary painter Jules Breton, who has evidently chosen his field for its sentimental rather than its pictorial value, and whose work is, perhaps accordingly, by contrast with Millet's, noticeably external and superficial even on the literary side. When Millet ceased to deal in the Correggio manner with Correggiesque subjects, and devoted himself to the material that was really native to him, to his own peasant genius--whatever he may have thought about it himself, he did so because he could treat this material pictorially with more freedom and less artificiality, with more zest and enthusiasm, with a deeper sympathy and a more intimate knowledge of its artistic characteristics, its pictorial potentialities. He is, I think, as a painter, a shade too much preoccupied with this material, he is a little too philosophical in regard to it, his pathetic struggle for existence exaggerated his sentimental affiliations with it somewhat, he made it too exclusively his subject, perhaps. We gain, it may be, at his expense. With his artistic gifts he might have been more fortunate, had his range been broader. But in the main it is his pictorial handling of this material, with which he was in such acute sympathy, that distinguishes his work, and that will preserve its fame long after its humanitarian and sentimental appeal has ceased to be as potent as it now is--at the same time that it has itself enforced this appeal in the subordinating manner I have suggested. When he was asked his intention, in his picture of a maimed calf borne away on a litter by two men, he said it was simply to indicate the sense of weight in the muscular movement and attitude of the bearers' arms.

His great distinction, in fine, is artistic. His early painting of conventional subjects is not without significance in its witness to the quality of his talent. Another may paint French peasants all his life

and never make them permanently interesting, because he has not Millet's admirable instinct and equipment as a painter. He is a superb colorist, at times--always an enthusiastic one; there is something almost unregulated in his delight in color, in his fondness for glowing and resplendent tone. No one gets farther away from the academic grayness, the colorless chiaro-oscuro of the conventional painters. He runs his key up and loads his canvas, occasionally, in what one may call not so much barbaric as uncultivated and elementary fashion. He cares so much for color that sometimes, when his effect is intended to be purely atmospheric, as in the "Angélus," he misses its justness and fitness, and so, in insisting on color, obtains from the color point of view itself an infelicitous--a colored--result. Occasionally he bathes a scene in yellow mist that obscures all accentuations and play of values. But always his feeling for color betrays him a painter rather than a moralist. And in composition he is, I should say, even more distinguished. His composition is almost always distinctly elegant. Even in so simple a scheme as that of "The Sower," the lines are as fine as those of a Raphael. And the way in which balance is preserved, masses are distributed, and an organic play of parts related to each other and each to the sum of them is secured, is in all of his large works so salient an element of their admirable excellence, that, to those who appreciate it, the dependence of his popularity upon the sentimental suggestion of the raw material with which he dealt seems almost grotesque. In his line and mass and the relations of these in composition, there is a severity, a restraint, a conformity to tradition, however personally felt and individually modified, that evince a strong classic strain in this most unacademic of painters. Millet was certainly an original genius, if there ever was one. In spite of, and in open hostility to, the popular and conventional painting of his day, he followed his own bent and went his own way. Better, perhaps, than any other painter, he represents absolute emancipation from the prescribed, from routine and formulary. But it would be a signal mistake to fail to see, in the most characteristic works of this most personal representative of romanticism, that subordination of the individual whim and isolated point of view to what is accepted, proven, and universal, which is essentially what we mean by the classic attitude. One may almost go so far as to say, considering its reserve, its restraint and poise, its sobriety and measure, its quiet and composure, its subordination of individual feeling to a high sense of artistic decorum, that, romantic as it is, unacademic as it is, its most incontestable claim to permanence is the truly classic spirit which, however modified, inspires and infiltrates it. Beside some of the later manifestations of individual genius in French painting, it is almost academic.

In Corot, anyone, I suppose, can see this note, and it would be surplusage to insist upon it. He is the ideal classic-romantic painter, both in temperament and in practice. Millet's subject, not, I think, his treatment--possibly his wider range--makes him seem more deeply serious than Corot, but he is not essentially as nearly unique. He is unrivalled

in his way, but Corot is unparalleled. Corot inherits the tradition of Claude; his motive, like Claude's, is always an effect, and, like Claude's, his means are light and air. But his effect is a shade more impalpable, and his means are at once simpler and more subtle. He gets farther away from the phenomena which are the elements of his ensemble, farther than Claude, farther than anyone. His touch is as light as the zephyr that stirs the diaphanous drapery of his trees. Beside it Claude's has a suspicion, at least, of unctuousness. It has a pure, crisp, vibrant accent, quite without analogue in the technic of landscape painting. Taking technic in its widest sense, one may speak of Corot's shortcomings--not, I think, of his failures. It would be difficult to mention a modern painter more uniformly successful in attaining his aim, in expressing what he wishes to express, in conveying his impression, communicating his sensations.

That a painter of his power, a man of the very first rank, should have been content--even placidly content--to exercise it within a range by no means narrow, but plainly circumscribed, is certainly witness of limitation. "Delacroix is an eagle, I am only a skylark," he remarked once, with his characteristic cheeriness. His range is not, it is true, as circumscribed as is generally supposed outside of France. Outside of France his figure-painting, for example, is almost unknown. We see chiefly variations of his green and gray arboreal pastoral--now idyllic, now heroic, now full of freshness, the skylark quality, now of grave and deep harmonies and wild, sweet notes of transitory suggestion. Of his figures we only know those shifting shapes that blend in such classic and charming manner with the glades and groves of his landscapes. Of his "Hagar in the Wilderness," his "St. Jerome," his "Flight into Egypt," his "Democritus," his "Baptism of Christ," with its nine life-size figures, who, outside of France, has even heard? How many foreigners know that he painted what are called architectural subjects delightfully, and even genre with zest?

But compared with his landscape, in which he is unique, it is plain that he excels nowhere else. The splendid display of his works in the Centenaire Exposition of the great World's Fair of 1889, was a revelation of his range of interest rather than of his range of power. It was impossible not to perceive that, surprising as were his essays in other fields to those who only knew him as a landscape painter, he was essentially and integrally a painter of landscape, though a painter of landscape who had taken his subject in a way and treated it in a manner so personal as to be really unparalleled. Outside of landscape his interest was clearly not real. In his other works one notes a certain débonnaire irresponsibility. He pursued nothing seriously but out-of-doors, its vaporous atmosphere, its crisp twigs and graceful branches, its misty distances and piquant accents, what Thoreau calls its inaudible panting. His true theme, lightly as he took it, absorbed him; and no one of any sensitiveness can ever regret it. His powers, following the indication of his true temperament, his most genuine

inspiration, are concentrated upon the very finest thing imaginable in landscape painting; as, indeed, to produce as they have done the finest landscape in the history of art, they must have been.

There are, however, two things worth noting in Corot's landscape, beyond the mere fact that, better even than Rousseau, he expresses the essence of landscape, dwells habitually among its inspirations, and is its master rather than its servant. One is the way in which he poetizes, so to speak, the simplest stretches of sward and clumps of trees, and long clear vistas across still ponds, with distances whose accents are pricked out with white houses and yellow cows and placid fishers and ferrymen in red caps, seen in glimpses through curtains of sparse, feathery leafage--or peoples woodland openings with nymphs and fawns, silhouetted against the sunset glow, or dancing in the cool gray of dusk. A man of no reading, having only the elements of an education in the general sense of the term, his instinctive sense for what is refined was so delicate that we may say of his landscapes that, had the Greeks left any they would have been like Corot's. And this classic and cultivated effect he secured not at all, or only very incidentally, through the force of association, by dotting his hillsides and vaporous distances with bits of classic architecture, or by summing up his feeling for the Dawn in a graceful figure of Orpheus greeting with extended gesture the growing daylight, but by a subtle interpenetration of sensuousness and severity resulting in precisely the sentiment fitly characterized by the epithet classic. The other trait peculiar to Corot's representation of nature and expression of himself is his color. No painter ever exhibited, I think, quite such a sense of refinement in so narrow a gamut. Green and gray, of course, predominate and set the key, but he has an interestingly varied palette on the hither side of splendor whose subtleties are capable of giving exquisite pleasure. Never did anyone use tints with such positive force. Tints with Corot have the vigor and vibration of positive colors--his lilacs, violets, straw-colored hues, his almost Quakerish coquetry with drabs and slates and pure clear browns, the freshness and bloom he imparted to his tones, the sweet and shrinking wild flowers with which as a spray he sprinkled his humid dells and brook margins. But Corot's true distinction--what gives him his unique position at the very head of landscape art, is neither his color, delicate and interesting as his color is, nor his classic serenity harmonizing with, instead of depending upon, the chance associations of architecture and mythology with which now and then he decorates his landscapes; it is the blithe, the airy, the truly spiritual way in which he gets farther away than anyone from both the actual pigment that is his instrument, and from the phenomena that are the objects of his expression--his ethereality, in a word. He has communicated his sentiment almost without material, one may say, so ethereally independent of their actual analogues is the interest of his trees and sky and stretch of sward. This sentiment, thus mysteriously triumphant over color or form, or other sensuous charm, which nevertheless are only subtly subordinated, and by no manner of means

treated lightly or inadequately, is as exalted as any that has in our day been expressed in any manner. Indeed, where, outside of the very highest poetry of the century, can one get the same sense of elation, of aspiring delight, of joy unmixed with regret--since "the splendor of truth" which Plato defined beauty to be, is more animating and consoling than the "weary weight of all this unintelligible world," is depressing to a spirit of lofty seriousness and sanity?

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Dupré and Diaz are the decorative painters of the Fontainebleau group. They are, of modern painters, perhaps the nearest in spirit to the old masters, pictorially speaking. They are rarely in the grand style, though sometimes Dupré is restrained enough to emulate if not to achieve its sobriety. But they have the *bel air*, and belong to the aristocracy of the painting world. Diaz, especially, has almost invariably the patrician touch. It lacks the exquisiteness of Monticelli's, in which there is that curiously elevated detachment from the material and the real that the Italians--and the Provençal painter's inspiration and method, as well as his name and lineage, suggest an Italian rather than a French association--exhibit far oftener than the French. But Diaz has a larger sweep, a saner method. He is never eccentric, and he has a dignity that is Iberian, though he is French rather than Spanish on his æsthetic side, and at times is as conservative as Rousseau--without, however, reaching Rousseau's lofty simplicity except in an occasional happy stroke. Both he and Dupré are primarily colorists. Dupré sees nature through a prism. Diaz's groups of dames and gallants have a jewel-like aspect; they leave the same impression as a tangle of ribbons, a bunch of exotic flowers, a heap of gems flung together with the felicity of haphazard. In general, and when they are in most completely characteristic mood, it is not the sentiment of nature that one gets from the work of either painter. It is not even *their* sentiment of nature--the emotion aroused in their susceptibilities by natural phenomena. What one gets is their personal feeling for color and design--their decorative quality, in a word.

The decorative painter is he to whom what is called "subject," even in its least restricted sense and with its least substantial suggestions, is comparatively indifferent. Nature supplies him with objects; she is not in any intimate degree his subject. She is the medium through which, rather than the material of which, he creates his effects. It is her potentialities of color and design that he seeks, or at any rate, of all her infinitely numerous traits, it is her hues and arabesques that strike him most forcibly. He is incurious as to her secrets and calls upon her aid to interpret his own, but he is so independent of her, if he be a decorative painter of the first rank--a Diaz or a Dupré--that his rendering of her, his picture, would have an agreeable effect, owing to its design or color or both, if it were turned upside down. Decorative painting in this sense may easily be carried so far as to

seem incongruous and inept, in spite of its superficial attractiveness. The peril that threatens it is whim and freak. Some of Monticelli's, some of Matthew Maris's pictures, illustrate the exaggeration of the decorative impulse. After all, a painter must get his effect, whatever it be and however it may shun the literal and the exact, by rendering things with pigments. And some of the decorative painters only escape things by obtruding pigments, just as the *_trompe-l'oeil_* or optical illusion painters get away from pigments by obtruding things. It is the distinction of Diaz and Dupré that they avoid this danger in most triumphant fashion. On the contrary, they help one to see the decorative element in nature, in "things," to a degree hardly attained elsewhere since the days of the great Venetians. Their predilection for the decorative element is held in leash by the classic tradition, with its reserve, its measure, its inculcation of sobriety and its sense of security. Dupré paints Seine sunsets and the edge of the forest at Fontainebleau, its "long mysterious reaches fed with moonlight," in a way that conveys the golden glow, the silvery gleam, the suave outline of spreading leafage, and the massive density of mysterious boscage with the force of an almost abstract acuteness. Does nature look like this? Who knows? But in this semblance, surely, she appeared to Dupré's imagination. And doubtless Diaz saw the mother-of-pearl tints in the complexion of his models, and is not to be accused of artificiality, but to be credited with a true sincerity of selection in juxtaposing his soft corals and carnations and gleaming topaz, amethyst, and sapphire hues. The most exacting literalist can hardly accuse them of solecism in their rendering of nature, true as it is that their decorative sense is so strong as to lead them to impose on nature their own sentiment instead of yielding themselves to absorption in *_hers_*, and thus, in harmonious and sympathetic concert with her, like Claude and Corot, Rousseau and Daubigny, interpreting her subtle and supreme significance.

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Rousseau carried the fundamental principle of the school farther than the others--with him interest, delight in, enthusiasm for nature became absorption in her. Whereas other men have loved nature, it has been acutely remarked, Rousseau was in love with her. It was felicitously of him, rather than of Dupré or Corot, that the naïf peasant inquired, "Why do you paint the tree; the tree is there, is it not?" And never did nature more royally reward allegiance to her than in the sustenance and inspiration she furnished for Rousseau's genius. You feel the point of view in his picture, but it is apparently that of nature herself as well as his own. It is not the less personal for this. On the contrary, it is extremely personal, and few pictures are as individual, as characteristic. Occasionally Diaz approaches him, as I have said, but only in the very happiest and exceptional moments, when the dignity of nature as well as her charm seems specially to impress and impose itself upon the less serious painter. But Rousseau's selection seems instinctive and not sought out. He knows the secret of nature's

pictorial element. He is at one with her, adopts her suggestions so cordially and works them out with such intimate sympathy and harmoniousness, that the two forces seem reciprocally to reinforce each other, and the result gains many fold in power from their subtle co-operation. His landscapes have in this way a Wordsworthian directness, simplicity, and severity. They are not troubled and dramatic like Turner's. They are not decorative like Dupré's, they have not the solemn sentiment of Daubigny's, or the airy aspiration and fairy-like blitheness of Corot's. But there is in them "all breathing human passion;" and at times, as in "Le Givre," they rise to majesty and real grandeur because they are impregnated with the sentiment, as well as are records of the phenomena, of nature, and one may say of Rousseau, paraphrasing Mr. Arnold's remark about Wordsworth, that nature seems herself to take the brush out of his hand and to paint for him "with her own bare, sheer, penetrating power." Rousseau, however, is French, and in virtue of his nativity exhibits always what Wordsworth's treatment of nature exhibits only occasionally, namely, the Gallic gift of style. It is rarely as felicitous as in Corot, in every detail of whose every work, one may almost say, its informing, co-ordinating, elevating influence is distinctly to be perceived; but it is always present as a factor, as a force dignifying and relieving from all touch, all taint of the commonness that is so often inseparably associated with art whose absorption in nature is listlessly unthinking instead of enthusiastic and alert. In Rousseau, too, in a word, we have the classic strain, as at least a psychological element, and note as one source of his power his reserve and restraint, his perfect self-possession.

In Daubigny a similar attitude toward nature is obvious, but with a sensible difference. Affection for, rather than absorption in her, is his inspiration. Daubigny stands somewhat apart from the Fontainebleau group, with whom nevertheless he is popularly and properly associated, for though he painted Normandy mainly, he was spiritually of the Barbizon kindred. He stands, however, somewhat apart from French painting in general, I think. There is less style, more sentiment, more poetry in his landscapes than in those of his countrymen who are to be compared with him. Beyond what is admirable in them there is something attaching as well. He drew and engraved a good deal, as well as painted. He did not concentrate his powers enough, perhaps, to make as signal and definite a mark as otherwise he might have done. He is a shade desultory, and too spontaneous to be systematic. One must be systematic to reach the highest point, even in the least material spheres. But never have the grave and solemn aspects of landscape found a sweeter and serener spirit to interpret them. In some of his pictures there is a truly religious feeling. His frankness recalls Constable's, but it is more distinguished in being more spiritual. He has not Diaz's elegance, nor Corot's witchery, nor Rousseau's power, but nature is more mysteriously, more mystically significant to him, and sets a deeper chord vibrating within him. He is a sensitive instrument on which she plays, rather than a magician who wins her secrets, or an observer whose

generalizing imagination she sets in motion. The design of some of his important works, notably that of his last Salon picture, is very distinguished, and in one of his large canvases representing a road like that from Barbizon through the level plain to Chailly, there is the spirit and sentiment of all the summer evenings that ever were. But he has distinctly less power than the strict Fontainebleau group. He has, in force, less affinity with them than Troyon has, whose force is often magnificent, and whose landscape is so sweet, often, and often so strong as well, that one wonders a little at his fondness for cattle--in spite of the way in which he justifies it by being the first of cattle painters. And neither Daubigny nor Troyon, nor, indeed, Rousseau himself, often reaches in dramatic grandeur the lofty landscape of Michel, who, with Paul Huet (the latter in a more strictly historical sense) were so truly the forerunners and initiators of the romantic landscape movement, both in sentiment and chronology, in spite of their Dutch tradition, as to make the common ascription of its debt to Constable, whose aid was so cordially welcomed in the famous Salon of 1824, a little strained.

IV

But quite aside from the group of poetic painters which stamped its impress so deeply upon the romantic movement at the outset, that to this day it is Delacroix and Millet, Decamps and Corot whom we think of when we think of the movement itself, the classic tradition was preserved all through the period of greatest stress and least conformity by painters of great distinction, who, working under the romantic inspiration and more or less according to what may be called romantic methods, nevertheless possessed the classic temperament in so eminent a degree that to us their work seems hardly less academic than that of the Revolution and the Empire. Not only Ingres, but Delaroche and Ary Scheffer, painted beside Géricault and Delacroix. Ary Scheffer was an eloquent partisan of romanticism, yet his "Dante and Beatrice" and his "Temptation of Christ" are admirable only from the academic point of view. Delaroche's "Hemicycle" and his many historical tableaux are surely in the classic vein, however free they may seem in subject and treatment by contrast with the works of David and Ingres. They leave us equally cold, at all events, and in the same way--for the same reason. They betray the painter's preoccupation with art rather than with nature. They do, in truth, differ widely from the works which they succeeded, but the difference is not temperamental. They suggest the French phrase, plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. Gérôme, for example, feels the exhilaration of the free air of romanticism fanning his enthusiasm. He does not confine himself, as, born a decade or two earlier, certainly he would have done, to classic subject. He follows Decamps and Marilhat to the Orient, which he paints with the utmost freedom, so far as the choice of theme is concerned--descending even to the danse du ventre of a Turkish café. He paints historical pictures

with a realism unknown before his day. He is almost equally famous in the higher class of _genre_ subjects. But throughout everything he does it is easy to perceive the academic point of view, the classic temperament. David assuredly would never have chosen one of Gérôme's themes; but had he chosen it, he would have treated it in much the same way. Allowance made for the difference in time, in general feeling of the æsthetic environment, the change in ideas as to what was fit subject for representation and fitting manner of treating the same subject, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that Ingres would have sincerely applauded Gérôme's "Cleopatra" issuing from the carpet roll before Cæsar. And if he failed to perceive the noble dramatic power in such a work as the "Ave, Cæsar, morituri te salutant," his failure would nowadays, at least among intelligent amateurs, be ascribed to an intolerance which it is one of the chief merits of the romantic movement to have adjudged absurd.

It is a source of really æsthetic satisfaction to see everything that is attempted as well done as it is in the works of such painters as Bouguereau and Cabanel. Of course the feeling that denies them large importance is a legitimate one. The very excellence of their technic, its perfect adaptedness to the motive it expresses, is, considering the insignificance of the motive, subject for criticism; inevitably it partakes of the futility of its subject-matter. Of course the personal value of the man, the mind, behind any plastic expression is, in a sense, the measure of the expression itself. If it be a mind interested in "poucet-box" covers, in the pictorial setting forth of themes whose illustration most intimately appeals to the less cultivated and more rudimentary appreciation of fine art--as indisputably the Madonnas and Charities and Oresteses and Bacchus Triumphs of M. Bouguereau do--one may very well dispense himself from the duty of admiring its productions. Life is short, and more important things, things of more significant import, demand attention. The grounds on which the works of Bouguereau and Cabanel are admired are certainly insufficient. But they are experts in their sphere. What they do could hardly be better done. If they appeal to a _bourgeois_, a philistine ideal of beauty, of interest, they do it with a perfection that is pleasing in itself. No one else does it half so well. To minds to which they appeal at all, they appeal with the force of finality; for these they create as well as illustrate the type of what is admirable and lovely. It is as easy to account for their popularity as it is to perceive its transitory quality. But not only is it a mark of limitation to refuse all interest to such a work as, for example, M. Cabanel's "Birth of Venus," in the painting of which a vast deal of technical expertness is enjoyably evident, and which in every respect of motive and execution is far above similar things done elsewhere than in France; it is a still greater error to confound such painters as M. Cabanel and M. Bouguereau with other painters whose classic temperament has been subjected to the universal romantic influence equally with theirs, but whose production is as different from theirs as is that of the thorough and pure

romanticists, the truly poetic painters.

The instinct of simplification is an intelligent and sound one. Its satisfaction is a necessary preliminary to efficient action of any kind, and indeed the basis of all fruitful philosophy. But in criticism this instinct can only be satisfied intelligently and soundly by a consideration of everything appealing to consideration, and not at all by heated and wilful, or superior and supercilious, exclusions. Catholicity of appreciation is the secret of critical felicity. To follow the line of least resistance, not to take into account those elements of a problem, those characteristics of a subject, to which, superficially and at first thought, one is insensitive, is to dispense one's self from a great deal of particularly disagreeable industry, but the result is only transitorily agreeable to the sincere intelligence. It is in criticism, I think, though no doubt in criticism alone, preferable to lose one's self in a maze of perplexity--distressing as this is to the critic who appreciates the indispensability of clairvoyance in criticism--rather than to reach swiftly and simply a conclusion which candor would have foreseen as the inevitable and unjudicial result of following one's own likes and whims, and one's contentment with which must be alloyed with a haunting sense of insecurity. In criticism it is perhaps better to keep balancing counter-considerations than to determine brutally by excluding a whole set of them because of the difficulty of assigning them their true weight. In this way, at least, one preserves the attitude of poise, and poise is perhaps the one essential element of criticism. In a word, that catholicity of sensitiveness which may be called mere impressionism, behind which there is no body of doctrine at all, is more truly critical than intolerant depreciation or unreflecting enthusiasm. "The main thing to do," says Mr. Arnold, in a significant passage, "is to get one's self out of the way and let humanity judge."

It is temptingly simple to deny all importance to painters who are not poetic painters. And the temptation is especially seductive when the prosaic painters are paralleled by such a distinguished succession of their truly poetic brethren as are the painters of the romantic epoch who are possessed of the classic temperament. But real criticism immediately suggests that prose has its place in painting as in literature. In literature we do not insist even that the poets be poetic. Poetic is not the epithet that would be applied, for instance, to French classic verse or the English verse of the eighteenth century, compared with the poetry, French or English, which we mean when we speak of poetry. Yet no one would think of denying the value of Dryden or even of Boileau. No one would even insist that, distinctly prosaic as are the qualities of Boileau--and I should say his was a crucial instance--he would have done better to abjure verse. And painting, in a wide sense, is just as legitimately the expression of ideas in form and color as literature is the expression of ideas in words. It is perfectly plain that Meissonier was not especially enamoured of beauty, as Corot, as

Troyon, as Decamps was. But nothing could be less critical than to deny Meissouier's importance and the legitimate interest he has for every educated and intelligent person, in spite of his literalness and his insensitiveness to the element of beauty, and indeed to any truly pictorial significance whatever in the wide range of subjects that he essayed, with, in an honorable sense, such distinguished success.

Especially in America, I think, where of recent years we have shown an Athenian sensitiveness to new impressions, the direct descendants of the classic period of French painting have suffered from the popularity of the Fontainebleau group. Their legitimate attachment to art, instead of the Fontainebleau absorption in nature, has given them a false reputation of artificiality. But the prose element in art has its justification as well as the poetic, and it is witness of a narrow culture to fail in appreciation of its admirable accomplishment. The academic wing of the French romantic painting is marked precisely by a breadth of culture that is itself a source of agreeable and elevated interest. The neo-Grec painters are thoroughly educated. They lack the picturesque and unexpected note of their poetic brethren--they lack the moving and interpreting, the elevating and exquisite touch of these; nay, they lack the penetrating distinction that radiates even from rusticity itself when it is inspired and transfigured as it appears in such works as those of Millet and Rousseau. But their distinction is not less real for being the distinction of cultivation rather than altogether native and absolute. It is perhaps even more marked, more pervasive, more directly associated with the painter's aim and effect. One feels that they are familiar with the philosophy of art, its history and practice, that they are articulate and eclectic, that for being less personal and powerful their horizon is less limited, their purely intellectual range, at all events, and in many cases their æsthetic interest, wider. They have more the cultivated man's bent for experimentation, for variety. They care more scrupulously for perfection, for form. With a far inferior sense of reality and far less felicity in dealing with it, their sapient skill in dealing with the abstractions of art is more salient. To be blind to their successful handling of line and mass and movement, is to neglect a source of refined pleasure. To lament their lack of poetry is to miss their admirable rhetoric; to regret their imperfect feeling for decorativeness is to miss their delightful decorum.

V

As one has, however, so often occasion to note in France--where in every field of intellectual effort the influence of schools and groups and movements is so great that almost every individuality, no matter how strenuous, falls naturally and intimately into association with some one of them--there is every now and then an exception that escapes these categories and stands quite by itself. In modern painting such

exceptions, and widely different from each other as the poles, are Couture and Puvis de Chavannes. Better than in either the true romanticists with the classic strain, or the academic romanticists with the classic temperament, the blending of the classic and romantic inspirations is illustrated in Couture. The two are in him, indeed, actually fused. In Puvis de Chavannes they appear in a wholly novel combination; his classicism is absolutely unacademic, his romanticism unreal beyond the verge of mysticism, and so preoccupied with visions that he may almost be called a man for whom the actual world does not exist--in the converse of Gautier's phrase. His distinction is wholly personal. He lives evidently on an exceedingly high plane--dwells habitually in the delectable uplands of the intellect. The fact that his work is almost wholly decorative is not at all accidental. His talent, his genius if one chooses, requires large spaces, vast dimensions. There has been a great deal of rather profitless discussion as to whether he expressly imitates the primitifs or reproduces them sympathetically. But really he does neither; he deals with their subjects occasionally, but always in a completely modern, as well as a thoroughly personal, way. His color is as original as his general treatment and composition. He had no schooling, in the École des Beaux Arts sense. A brief period in Henri Scheffer's studio, three months under Couture, after he had begun life in an altogether different field of effort, yielded him all the explicit instruction he ever had. His real study was done in Italy, in the presence of the old masters of Florence. With this equipment he revolutionized modern decoration, established, at any rate, a new convention for it. His convention is a little definite, a little bald. One may discuss it apart from his own handling of it, even. It is a shade too express, too confident, too little careless both of tradition and of the typical qualities that secure permanence. In other hands one can easily imagine how insipid it might become. It has too little body, its scheme is too timorous, too vaporous to be handled by another. Puvis de Chavannes will probably have few successful imitators. But one must immediately add that if he does not found a school, his own work is, perhaps for that reason, at all events in spite of it, among the most important of the day. Quite unperturbed by current discussions, which are certainly of the noisiest by which the current of artistic development was ever deflected, he has kept on his way, and has finally won all suffrages for an æsthetic expression that is really antagonistic to the general æsthetic spirit of his time.

Puvis de Chavannes is, perhaps, the most interesting figure in French painting to-day. Couture is little more than a name. It is curious to consider why. Twenty years ago he was still an important figure. He had been an unusually successful teacher. Many American painters of distinction, especially, were at one time his pupils--Hunt, La Farge, George Butler. He theorized as much, as well--perhaps even better than--he painted. His "Entretiens d'atelier" are as good in their way as his "Baptism of the Prince Imperial." He had a very distinguished talent, but he was too distinctly clever--clever to the point of

sophistication. In this respect he was distinctly a man of the nineteenth century. His great work, "Romains de la Décadence," created as fine an effect at the Centenary Exhibition of the Paris World's Fair in 1889 as it does in the Louvre, whence it was then transferred, but it was distinctly a decorative effect--the effect of a fine panel in the general mass of color and design; it made a fine centre. It remains his greatest performance, the performance upon which chiefly his fame will depend, though as painting it lacks the quality and breadth of "Le Fauconnier," perhaps the most interesting of his works to painters themselves, and of the "Day-Dreams" of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. Its permanent interest perhaps will be the historical one, due to the definiteness with which it assigns Couture his position in the evolution of French painting. It shows, as everything of Couture shows, the absence of any pictorial feeling so profound and personal as to make an impression strong enough to endure indefinitely. And it has not, on the other hand, the interest of reality--that faithful and enthusiastic rendering of the external world which gives importance to and fixes the character of the French painting of the present day.

Had Regnault lived, he would have more adequately--or should I say more plausibly?--marked the transition from romanticism to realism. Temperamentally he was clearly a thorough romanticist--far more so, for instance, than his friend Fortuny, whose intellectual reserve is always conspicuous. He essayed the most vehement kind of subjects, even in the classical field, where he treated them with truly romantic truculence. He was himself always, moreover, and ideally cared as little for nature as a fairy-story teller. In this sense he was more romantic than the romanticists. His "Automedon," his portrait of General Prim, even his "Salome," are wilful in a degree that is either superb or superficial, as one looks at them; but at any rate they are romantic _à outrance_. At the same time it was unmistakably the aspect of things rather than their significance, rather than his view of them, that appealed to him. He was farther away from the classic inspiration than any other romanticist of his fellows; and at the same time he cared for the external world more on its own account and less for its suggestions, than any painter of equal force before Courbet and Bastien-Lepage. The very fact that he was not, intellectually speaking, wholly _dans son assiette_, as the French say, shows that he was a genius of a transitional moment. One's final thought of him is that he died young, and one thinks so not so much because of the dramatic tragedy of his taking off by possibly the last Prussian bullet fired in the war of 1870-71, as because of the essentially experimental character of his painting. Undoubtedly he would have done great things. And undoubtedly they would have been different from those that he did; probably in the direction--already indicated in his most dignified performance--of giving more consistency, more vivid definiteness, more reality, even, to his already striking conceptions.

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